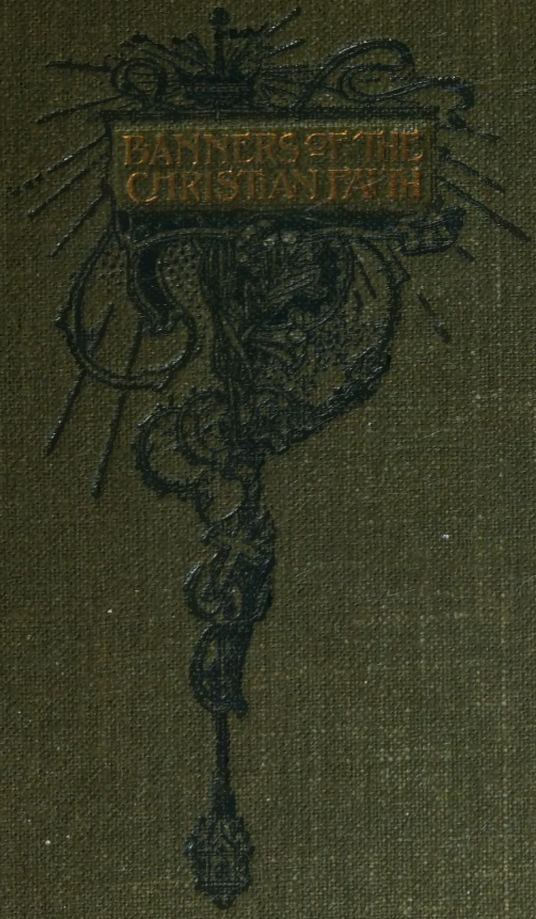

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Banners of
The Christian Faith

C. ROCKFORD STETSON

Banners of The Christian Faith

By the

Right Rev.

Arthur F. Winnington Ingram, D.D.

Lord Bishop of London

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C. ROCHFORD STETSON

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To

The Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral

Who received me a year ago with most brotherly welcome, and who have helped me every step of the way since

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Preface to the First Edition

NO one can be more conscious of the imperfections of these simple discourses than the author of them. With the exception of the last two they were delivered extempore in St. Paul's Cathedral on the Sunday afternoons in February, June, and October 1898, and I am largely indebted to the excellent reporters of the *Family Churchman* and the *Church Family Newspaper* that I am able to reproduce them in the form in which they were spoken at all. Two reasons lead me to publish them one that at the time that they were delivered they produced so many questions and letters from members of the congregation as to seem to show that they were not wholly out of touch with what people were thinking, and feeling, and hoping; and, secondly, that there seems a need of a book to put into the

hands of the ordinary layman to explain in a popular way the main truths which a consistent Churchman holds. Although, therefore, the title more strictly belongs only to the five sermons preached in the month of October, I have called the whole book "Banners of the Christian Faith," as the best title to indicate its scope and purpose.

Of the last two sermons, one was preached during the year before the University of Cambridge, and in substance earlier in the year before the University of Oxford, and the other in Westminster Abbey in support of the East London Church Fund.

A. F. STEPNEY.

2 AMEN COURT, E.C.

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BANNERS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

I

FAITH

"*Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?*"—St. Luke xviii. 8.

IT is always a solemn thing to any man in any place to begin a new ministry. In the old place everything has been so familiar. There have been the faces of men and women whom he has learnt to know and trust as friends. There gradually has grown up such spiritual sympathy between a man and his people that it became at last like standing up before five hundred or a thousand friends. He knew where the old faces were sure to be; he knew why they were there. But in a new ministry all is changed. New faces front the preacher. Those who come wonder

to themselves whether they will find any help in him, whether there will grow up between him and them any of that subtle spiritual confidence without which preaching is in vain. If that is the case in any church, how much more is it in St. Paul's Cathedral! Here there fronts the pulpit a great sea of faces, most of whom are quite unknown, and will always remain unknown; a great sea of humanity with unknown troubles, unknown difficulties, unknown cares. And as one stands and faces them, there is borne over one almost a sense of hopelessness. When one thinks how the Gospel has been preached from this pulpit by men ten times as able as oneself, in ten thousand ways, is it any good, one asks oneself, to stand up and try to find an entrance into hearts closed as yet to the old message, or find as good a way to the hearts of those who have accepted it?

And yet there is a passage in a poet which comforts one to-day:—

> "To the sentinel that hour is regal
> When he mounts on guard."

With the great sky above him, as he watches over the silent army, with the great overarching

heavens around him, he stands a common soldier indeed, but for the time solitary, prominent, responsible. He has the great army behind him, and though but a common soldier, he feels them for a time in his care. So if it is true that this overarching dome is but the symbol of the overarching love of GOD, if it is true that every soul here, every face that looks up in this church is an immortal soul, bound to live for ever, whether it wishes to do so or not, an immortal soul known to GOD and loved by Him, then—

> "To the sentinel that hour is regal
> When he mounts on guard."

He has the traditions and support of the great Church behind him. He is only a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the LORD." There is only one question to ask himself in the Presence of the overarching GOD Who listens and loves and cares: What is the message he has to deliver each day to advance the kingdom of GOD?

We begin then with Faith. "When the SON OF MAN cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" And it is obvious that if He does not find faith He will find nothing. Nothing is more

striking about our LORD JESUS CHRIST than this, that while He preached, and hoped the best, He was never afraid to face the worst. You can hardly imagine a greater contrast than the magnificent hopefulness of the declaration, "Shall the LORD avenge His own elect? I tell you He will avenge them speedily"—with the sadness with which, as He looked down the ages, and saw men who would undermine the faith, men who through timidity could not accept it, men who through the clouds of doubt would find the great sun hid from their eyes, He said, "Nevertheless, when the SON OF MAN cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

It makes us ask two questions. First, what is this faith on which everything depends, on which the success or failure of JESUS CHRIST's mission depends? and secondly, would He find that faith if He came to-day?

First, what is faith? I suppose that on no subject in the world are there greater misconceptions than on the nature and character of faith. There are some who think, and honestly think, that faith is mere credulity. They say: "Only read the narrative of the New Testament, and you will find a premium placed on credulity. You

will find that even JESUS CHRIST could do no mighty works where there was unbelief. You will find constantly that He orders nothing to be said about His miracles. You will find, 'According to your faith be it unto you' repeated time after time." The man who sends his wife and children to church, and who would like to believe in religion, often thinks that, being a business man and having to weigh solid facts every day, he can find in religion no solid fact to weigh. This was actually said to me by an earnest man, a stranger to me, who came to see me this week. We must face this. I believe that this idea that they have got to put their reasons behind their backs, haunts the minds of a thousand men who never breathe it to their nearest and their dearest, and that although they even come to church and feel the attraction and glow of a glorious religion, it is often with a sad heart they come, feeling that they have not got the faith of which religious people speak.

When we go to another rank of life, the same thing is spoken more bluntly. We were passing through East London one day in procession, to lay the foundation-stone of a church, and as we went through the great Saturday crowd I heard

a man say, "Look at them there, prostituting their intellects!" So again, in Victoria Park one Sunday afternoon, an earnest young secularist asked from the platform: "Would it not be better if the rev. gentleman were to tell us young fellows something to help our reasons, and not try to make us swallow things as a matter of faith?"

Let us face, then, this common idea, this deadly accusation. And I will have you notice, first, that the Bible attaches the most tremendous importance to our reason. God, we are taught, made our reasons, and when He had made them, He said that they were very good. When we look a little further we find that revelation is adapted in the most careful way to our reason. That faith which is spoken of in the New Testament is not credulity. It is a moral quality of trust in a person. The people spoken of as making miracles impossible had no trust in Jesus Christ. They were not in the moral state of mind to be able to understand or appreciate a miracle, but when once those people gain the moral state of mind, then proofs are given. "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bone as ye see Me have," is said to the disciples, and five hundred people, in broad

daylight, on a mountain are given a vision of the Risen LORD. Evidence is courted in the New Testament. Once have the inquirer in the right state of mind, and the Bible gives full play to our reason.

The first thing, therefore, to get rid of, if we are to see our way through this accusation against our faith, is the idea that GOD and religion and the Church and the Bible do not welcome the intellects of us all. Bring your reason to the faith. From long experience with doubters, I find that they often doubt, because they do not think enough, and not because they think too much. Use that intellect to the very full extent to which GOD has given it to you. The ocean of truth is like the great ocean itself, shallow enough for the child to play in, but deep enough to bear up the great ships. There is depth enough in the great revelation of GOD for the intellect, and far more than the intellect of every man and woman in this church to find employment.

Then notice this—that conversely, just as religion recognises the intellect, so science and the study of nature demand faith. A great geologist said once, "At first the mind refuses to take in the revealed facts of geology; but at last, after

patient study and earnest investigation, truth finds its home." I desire no better words to use of our holy religion. At first the mind refuses to take in the revealed facts of religion, but at last, after patient study and earnest thought, truth finds its home. Newton discovered by faith the law of gravitation. It was by belief in the great forces acting and reacting in a faithful way that he made his great discovery; and every great discoverer goes forward by faith into the unknown. Abraham by faith went out, not knowing whither he went. So the great discoverers both of science and geography pursue their way by faith.

The great mistake then which so many of us make is to imagine that we consist solely of our analytical reason. Nothing of the sort. We are men, and our faith is an act of the whole man. When Darwin was looking back over the past, he said that for some accountable reason he had lost the enjoyment of poetry and no longer cared for music. May he not have atrophied, by the exclusive use of the analytic reason, the other polar forces of the brain by which he enjoyed and understood poetry, music, and religion? What we have to bring to the help of

our intellect is our imagination—that divine power which sees great things and grasps them. It is the imagination, my brother, you will find, that is failing in you. It is not anything in religion that is against your reason ; it is your imagination which is being atrophied. There are some who, when they see a forest, cannot grasp a forest, but only see a thousand trees. There are some who look up into the sky at night and only see a thousand stars. They do not grasp the Universe. The great appeal that is made in our religion is not only to our intellect, which it recognises fully, but to the imagination. Picture to yourself what the world would be without religion! Picture to yourself the magnificent appeal which GOD makes in JESUS CHRIST! The record, says the historian Lecky, of those three short years has done more to regenerate mankind than all the work of statesmen and thought of philosophers. Bring the imagination to bear, conceive great things, and you have gone half way towards grasping the magnificent conception of the revelation of JESUS CHRIST.

And with your imagination bring your conscience. Have you ever thought, you who are trying to be content with what so many try to

be content with, a vague belief in a God who does nothing, a God who is behind Nature, but who interferes in no way with it, who has done nothing whatever historically, for the sufferings of the world, have you ever thought whether it is possible to trust and love such a God? I for one could not. How could I trust and love a God who had looked down upon the sorrow and misery of the world, and done nothing; who stays up there on the hills careless of mankind? We could worship no rose-crowned Apollo, who never dipped his finger in the world's anguish; but we can worship and can love a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. Bring conscience to bear. Face the sorrow of the world. Face those dying people in little garrets in East London. And then is it not more credible to you? Does not your conscience demand that God should have come down into the heart of it? Is it not an appeal that goes home to you? Just as a great general who might say, "I cannot stop this hard campaign; I cannot explain to you why it is so difficult; but I can lie on the hard ground with you, I can share your rations, I can go into the thick of the fight"—so Jesus Christ makes a similar appeal in the name of God. Bring your

imagination and bring your conscience to bear with your intellect, and the whole man will attain to faith.

Then notice this: that just as the great discoveries in nature, after they have been conceived by the imagination, are perpetually tested by experience, so we have the mighty witness of experience to the spiritual verities which we believe. There was a little lad in a London street, on one of our foggy days, seen to be holding in his hand a stick with a string attached to it. Some one asked, "What is it you are holding so tightly in your hand?" and the lad replied, "I am flying my kite; it is up there right in the midst of the cloud and fog. I saw it go there." "But how do you know the kite is there at all? You can't see it." "No," said he, "but I can feel it pull." I use that trivial illustration for a purpose. There are some who imagine that we have no verification of our faith. I say, my Christian brethren, that we cannot all be wrong. We cannot all be wrong when, down the ages, millions, queens and working women, kings and working men, statesmen, philosophers, girls, and boys, all say they have "felt it pull"—when, one after another, in every grade of life, they stand up and say, "I believed

in the power of Prayer, and I have practised it; I have knelt down and prayed to the Being of Whom I had heard, and I stand here as a humble witness to bear testimony that my prayer was answered." I say that the evidence of accumulating verification is exactly the same for spiritual things as the verification of the facts of science. We know St. John dared to say—and there are hundreds in this church who would humbly dare to say it to-day —"We know that our fellowship is with the FATHER and His SON, JESUS CHRIST." Every one who kneels down and puts forth that faith, and finds strength come in answer to his prayer, has helped to verify the great hypothesis of the world.

Secondly, is faith opposed to practical work? Have you not heard it often said, in the club or in the city, that it does not matter the least what a man believes so long as he does what is right? The first thing we have to say of that statement is, that it is an entirely false antithesis. If by faith you mean a dead belief in a number of dead dogmas, if by faith you mean the acceptance of a few shibboleths which do not affect the life, then I say that is not the faith of which the Bible speaks at all. But true faith, the faith which works by

love, has such an instantaneous effect upon action, that you can only compare it to the flash and report of a firearm. Take an agnostic who, as some do in London, sends the most generous gifts to church people and clergymen for the good of the poor of London. Has that man no faith? Of course he has. He has faith in the brotherhood of man; he has faith that truth is better than lying; he has faith in the belief that those who have must give to those who have not, and it is a glorious thing to believe that. As a matter of fact, he is taught it by JESUS CHRIST. These things were not believed or practised in any fulness till JESUS CHRIST came. But in his case it is his faith that is creating his action: the faith and the action are like the flash and report of a gun. It is a simple misstatement of fact to say that his faith and his action have nothing to do with one another at all. Then, secondly, is it true to say that it does not matter what we believe, that it is all one whether we believe in Mahomet or CHRIST? Go, my friend, to some Mahommedan country, and come back and tell us if you think so! Why, the great despair of those who visit Mahommedan countries is this, that while the people intensely believe what they do believe, they

have got a faith which can never lift them above a certain level. I believe in Mahomet, and I believe in CHRIST, the same thing! Why, the most down-trodden, ignorant, illiterate people to-day who accept the Christian faith up to such a point, that it can be developed at last into full action, have a possession ten times as great as the possession of any who have a faith of less grandeur and less uplifting power, because they have something in their grasp to which they may live up to some day, and the others have something which cannot lift them above where they are. What is the making of the men and women I see in this congregation to-day? What is the most essential thing? It is what they believe. If you want to test a man's character, you not only look where he goes on Sunday, but you watch his face to see what he believes in his heart. If it is only when clinking money into the till that his face brightens, then you know that he believes in Mammon, that he believes and trusts in his gold. If he has an image before his mind, something like himself, which he likes the world to flatter, then he believes in himself. In whatever temple he may bow the knee, he bows his heart in the temple raised to himself. The one thing that tests the character is

the faith; and, therefore, before we pass from faith to-day, remember that it is the most delusive and misleading falsehood to imagine that faith and action are something apart from one another.

Well, then, what does faith come out to be? If faith is this energising, active, brave, strong angel which bears up the universe, if faith is the lever which moves the world, if the very tombstones in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey cry back to us from men like Howard—men who have cleansed the prisons, who have freed slaves, who have reformed the factory. "It is by faith we have done it; by faith in GOD. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto GOD's name be the praise." Then surely it becomes a most searching question, "When the SON OF MAN cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

We have a dark side and we have a bright side to face. It would be possible to make out the most appalling picture that CHRIST could find no faith if He came to-day. If we were to go by this, that only one in a hundred in a place like East London or South London go either to church or chapel; if we take the statistics that 1.7 per thousand are all who are confirmed in the Deanery of Spital-

fields; if we find that a lecture to the undergraduates of Oxford produces as many doubting questions as a lecture in Bethnal Green; if we see how little effect the church-going of many people has upon their week-day lives, then we might answer in despair that CHRIST would not find faith if He came to-day. But, on the other side, there is a brighter point of view. We must not forget that there are thousands who never come to church or chapel, who are acting up imperfectly to what faith they have, that we are going through a testing period when unreal belief and unreal practice are being burnt up to make way for a great building in the future.

This great cathedral in which we are met could not be built in its beauty till after a great burning had taken place of the old; and this giving-up of church-going among men in the West-end, and this abstention from church-going for a time among men in the East is, I believe, only a part of that testing of reality, that burning up of hypocrisy, that burning up of unreal belief, which is to make way for the grand cathedral of faith in the future. Only remember, that in the building up of it every man, woman, and child must take their part.

Faith

Every man who is not ashamed of his faith where he works, every woman who bears a brave witness in her drawing-room or in her cottage, every boy who stands by his faith at school, all are helping to make it possible that when JESUS CHRIST comes He shall find faith on the earth. When the birds one day—in a beautiful story of Mr. Warde Fowler's—were discussing the nature and character of man, they were much puzzled by him. They thought him harsh and difficult to understand—all but one bird. At the end of the debate the swallow, spreading its wings to fly up into the boundless air, said, "We live by love and trust. As for understanding, that will come afterwards."

II

HOPE

"*We are saved by hope.*"—ROMANS viii. 24.

WE have discussed the subject of Faith. We have seen that faith is not the unreasoning thing which some people imagine, but, on the other hand, that it demands the use of our reason—that it is an eminently reasonable thing, that it is the great creative faculty by which men discover things, whether in science, geography, or religion—that so far from it being unverified, faith is being perpetually verified every day—that our connection with the unseen world was found to be a real one, that just as the boy said of his kite which had passed behind the London fog, "I feel it pull," so these thousands of men and women down the ages could not be wrong in saying that they had fellowship with GOD and His SON JESUS CHRIST. And then we turned to the question of whether faith and action were

opposed. We saw that faith and action were as closely combined as the report and the flash of a gun. We saw that all the great reformers we commemorate either here or in Westminster Abbey had worked their reforms by faith; that it was not too much to say that those who had turned this world upside down for good were those who most firmly believed in another.

And now we pass from faith to hope, and we pass under the guidance of St. Paul. St. Paul says that there are three things which abide, three things, that is, which last under all the changes of fashion and of custom, and of the varying schemes of different generations—three things which remain as the abiding strands of the human character, and of those the first is faith and the second is hope. Now when we turn to consider hope we are brought face to face with this—that hope differs from faith inasmuch as it suffers from not being taken seriously, as faith is. Even those who feel most their lack of faith know that faith is an essential; they know that without faith it is impossible to please God, and that those who come to God must believe that He is, and

that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

But with Hope it is all different. We look upon Hope, do we not? as a kind of beautiful fairy queen, and where Hope is so beautiful we are apt to think she can do no useful work. She is like a beautiful woman whom people think to be above doing strong and useful work; but those who know her best, those who have seen the most tragic sides of life, know that although she is bright and beautiful on the bridal morning as the young couple come forth, and think that they are going to tread a path of flowers, yet it is on the tragic side of life that Hope is at her best. Fourteen years ago there was a young girl at a country town on her back day after day, week after week. I had the privilege about fourteen years ago to go and pray by the girl and read to her perhaps twice a week. Often since that time has gone, when I have passed that country town, I have stopped between trains to go and see her, and this week—for she had been three years lying there before I saw her—after seventeen years of continuous suffering, never moving from her bed, her body was taken down from the cross on which it lay and

her soul has gone to Paradise. But what was it that kept her up through all these years? What was it we always found by her side, like a tender nurse, lifting her up in bed, speaking to her cheering words, whispering soft things about the better world where there was no more pain? It was Hope! Hope was there. It was Hope who smoothed her and made it possible for her to bear those seventeen years; and it was Hope who led her this week, brushing aside the veil, through the gates of Eternal Life.

Or take another scene:—

"'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.
I met a preacher there I knew, and said,
'Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?'
'Bravely!' said he, 'for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of CHRIST, *the living Bread.*'
O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,
To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!
Thou makest the Heaven thou hopest indeed thy home."

Thus Matthew Arnold. But what did he mean? He meant that Hope, the beautiful queen we

think her, too beautiful to soil her hands or mar her face with work, goes up and down the slums of East London with the worker as he toils on through all his difficulties, and that from the worst disappointment he is saved by Hope.

Or, again, a young man is working in his study. All the glamour of scientific discovery is sweeping over him, and his one great thought is to imitate and follow and back up his great master Darwin. He is studying science, and he makes some of the most original experiments that have ever been made; but the exclusive use of the analytical reason, as in the case of his master, Darwin, clouds his faith. The boyish essay on Prayer is withdrawn from publication, and for years there rests upon his mind a cloud of awful doubt. But he had in his study, at his work, as his constant companion, something that never left him, something that always told him that truth could be learned, that some day his boyish faith would come back to him, something which kept him perfectly honest, perfectly sincere, perfectly true to himself through it all, and that thing was Hope. And when only a week before he died he walked up the Latin Chapel at Oxford, and as a

firm believer received the Holy Communion in full possession of his magnificent faculties, it was Hope that walked in front of him, very reverently, having done her work: George Romanes was saved by Hope. It is a calumny, then, on Hope to look on her as a merely beautiful fairy queen. Hope is a nurse, Hope is a worker, Hope is a most delightful and sustaining intellectual friend.

What, then—that is the next question—is the peculiar power of Hope? Why is it put by Paul as the second of all the Christian graces? It is a tremendous thing to be placed between faith and love. What is the magic power of Hope which places her in such a position in the Christian life? And the first thing which we notice about Hope—and she wants watching to find out the peculiar magic of her power—is that she purifies the human character. "He that hath this hope," says St. John, "purifies himself even as CHRIST is pure." There may be in this city some young man struggling in a deadly grip with his passions. He may be at the time of life when they are at their worst, and in the struggle there are many things which can help him. There is the society of good people; there is the will of

the man to keep down the mere instincts of the animal; but there is one thing without which he will never conquer; there is one thing which will make the difference whether he is victorious or defeated, and that is Hope. It is a terrible thing to watch the struggles of men against strong temptation; there is the danger of despair, of giving up, of believing the devil's lie that morality is impossible because God's physical laws make God's moral laws impossible to keep. It is the loneliness of the struggle, which is the worst part of it, combined with the belief that there has never been any one before who has ever had so awful a struggle. My brother, you are quite wrong. No temptations take you but such as are common to men. God's moral laws cannot contradict His physical laws. Struggle on; God is our Hope. There is strength enough in God to conquer every device of the devil and all his satellites. Only hope on, as thousands have hoped before, and you will be remembered among the thousands who are saved by Hope.

Or, again, not only has Hope this purifying power, not only will it make us believe that we are meant to live with angels and not herd with

animals, not only will it lift a man into a different state of mind altogether, and purify his character, but also Hope is the strongest influence that we can exert over other people. It often happens that some story written for a child gives us perhaps more instruction than any more learned or philosophical account of human action. It is possible that some of you may have read a little story for children called "Little Lord Fauntleroy." If you have you will have read a magnificent account of the influence of Hope on others. You will remember how the little lad goes to stay with his grandfather, and that grandfather is one of the most selfish, the meanest, and the most unkind of old men that have ever lived. But the boy believes in him. The boy, only about fourteen, keeps saying to his grandfather, "Oh, grandfather, how they must love you; you are so generous, you are so kind, you are so considerate to every one you meet. Surely you must be loved by all." And the lesson of that beautiful story is the influence of Hope on character. The old gentleman cannot withstand the belief of his boy; his boy believes in him; his grandson thinks him all this, and he dare not disappoint him, and he grows to be the

unselfish, generous man that the boy thought him!

Now I speak, doubtless, to many with children of their own, to many teachers, to many who have young people in their care, about whom they are very anxious that they shall grow up good and pure and true; I say, surround them with Hope, believe in them, and let them know that you believe in them. The strongest influence next to the power of GOD upon any human soul is to be believed in, to be expected to rise to an ideal, to be expected to be true, and pure, and kind. Have Hope in the schoolroom, have Hope in the drawing-room, have Hope in the workshop, and Hope, you will find, will draw out all that is best in those you love, and mould them by her wonderful power into your ideal of them.

Then, again, thirdly, Hope is the greatest inspirer of corporate work. And here we have to beware of a travesty of Hope. Those of us who serve on boards and committees know that we do not believe very much in the merely sanguine man—the man who always has got a scheme which he thinks perfectly infallible, which he carries through in spite of all advice, and

sometimes by his glib tongue and power of talk drags the committee or board into some miserable disaster. Now in our fear, in our right fear of the merely sanguine man, in God's name do not let us despise the hopeful man. So far from Hope being a hindrance upon boards or committees, social settlements, or any other corporate work, Hope is the inspirer that keeps them going. You have seen sometimes the summer breeze sway down the cornstalks in a great field; they all bow beneath its magic power; that is how souls are bowed down by the influence of Hope. One hopeful man will save a garrison; one hopeful woman will inspire a parish. What we want in London in all our work, in all our corporate work, is not less hope, but more hope.

And this brings me to a special thing which I want to say with all the emphasis I can. There is one cause in London to-day which is failing, and failing in the most disastrous and disgraceful way, for want of hope. It so happens that I have had recently to take the lead of all the rescue and preventive work of the diocese of London, to take the chair, that is, of the council which is the Central Council for the diocese, and knowing the tremendous urgency of the work, I

naturally turned to see what was the support that the richest diocese in the world gave to this Central Council for dealing with the vice of London. There were other things doubtless supported—refuges and homes and so on—which have their own funds, but you will hardly credit that the whole sum given to the Central Council of the diocese of London is £600 a year. Why, £6000 would be mere child's-play to what is wanted. I find the Homes of London, the great central Homes, both in sheer bankruptcy. And when you ask how is this possible, what is the explanation given in this nineteenth century of the Christian era in a country which rejoices in calling itself Christian, with the churches of the West-end thronged with worshippers, and the streets of central London thronged in another way at night, and when you remember how the motto of Christianity is to seek and to save that which was lost, when you ask how this inconsistency is possible in the diocese, I believe the true explanation is that it is for want of hope. People imagine that there is a certain class of sin which must go on, that there is a certain class of sinner who cannot be saved, and that for a certain class of people JESUS CHRIST died in vain. My

brothers and sisters, why is this? You do not find a want of hope among the workers. Ask that bright woman who for years has left her comfortable home and gone down at midnight and worked in our streets—ask her whether she is doing a hopeless work, and she will tell you, "Hopeless! I have saved a hundred myself these last ten years." She says, "It is the most hopeful work I have ever done. They respond to a sister's love and a sister's tenderness. Only go the right way to work, and thousands will be won." And when she goes to the great white throne there will be hundreds of hands stretched to greet her. They will say, "It is you who saved us when other people thought we were hopeless. It was your hand that dragged us out of the mire. It was your sweet voice that welcomed us and encouraged us to try again; you saved us, we were saved by you." And she will answer back, "And I was saved by Hope."

Or, again, take the Rescue Homes. It was my happiness this week to visit one of the Homes of London. A brighter, more human place, more full of love, a place more full of hope, you could not imagine — bright, loving women, bringing back to a pure and holy life their younger sisters

—the whole Home not like the stern Home of which one sometimes reads, but brimful of love, tenderness, and gentleness.

Or, again, take the work among the men. It is obvious that this campaign is a most unequal one unless we men are working bravely and dealing with our brothers while the women are dealing with the women. A society which aims at this, the White Cross Society, is also nearly bankrupt; very little money is given to it at all, simply from hopelessness. Whereas those who know what it is to address working men on this subject, or to gather in working lads and speak to them, know that this is the most fruitful work in the world. From nobody do you get such a response on the moral question as from a body of working men. Nowhere do you feel you have done so much good as when you gather in working lads, and in an honest, straightforward way appeal to their manly instincts to trample down all that is miserable, low, and vile. It is the hopefulness of the work which those who have tried it know best.

I appeal to you, then, my friends, as we rally for a new campaign, first for £6000 a year to carry it on. I ask you next for the earnest

prayers of every single man, woman, and child in this church. There is no cry so piteous as that which comes out from the streets of a great city.

> "I beg of you, calm souls, whose wondering pity
> Looks on paths you never trod,
> I beg of you who suffer, for all sorrow
> Must be very near to God,
> And the need is even greater than you see;
> Pray for me."

And, lastly, I ask for workers. I ask every man in this congregation who will help me in this campaign to let me know his name. I ask the women here—carefully tested, for women untested and untrained must be first tested and trained—I ask those who still have youth enough to sympathise with their younger sisters, and yet have experience enough to help them, to send in their names as helpers in this work. And not only in this work, but in all our work, in our own souls, and our work for others, I plead that we take the Angel of Hope as our guide, and, if we do, she will lead us on through every difficulty and every danger, till she leads us at last to the realms of eternal day.

III

LOVE

"*But now abideth faith, hope, love—these three; but the greatest of these is love.*"—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

WE have studied together faith and hope. We have seen the reasonable, the creative, the self-verifying power of faith; we have seen the absurdity of supposing it to be opposed to reason at all. We have thought together of the purifying, the moulding, the inspiring power of hope, beautiful hope, with all its wondrous strength and magic influence. And so great were those two things that it is almost paralysing—at any rate, to the preacher—to be told that a greater than these is Love. Yet the first thing that strikes us is, that the whole civilised world has come round—at any rate, in theory—to the teaching of St. Paul. To an educated Roman of the time of St. Paul it would have seemed the most ridiculous assertion possible that the greatest thing in the world was Love. To die

with a smile on his face, to wrap himself up in the toga of his reserve, to be self-contained and absolutely self-controlled, that was his ideal, and a grand one, too, up to a point; but the attitude of Marcus Aurelius, for instance, towards Christianity, shows us that the educated Roman of the day would have heard with something like contempt that "the greatest of these is Love."

And yet to-day, take up any magazine—the most anti-Church magazine that you can find—and look to see what its teaching is about social matters. What is it which the popular magazine puts before us as the greatest thing of all? Away with creeds! Away with dogmas! But what is important? The service of man; doing good to one's fellows! The verdict of the popular magazine of to-day is, that cleverness may be a great thing, and learning a great thing, but a greater than these is Love.

Or pick up a philosophical treatise on ethics, and, in a more cumbrous style, you will find the same thing said. What comes out as the ultimate basis of conduct in such books? Is it not Altruism? But Altruism after all is but a cumbrous name for love, and was taught the

world by JESUS CHRIST, and therefore the verdict of the ethical treatise is the verdict of St. Paul, that "the greatest of these is Love."

Or take again practical life. I speak to men here who know what practical life is, and I ask you who is the villain that is hissed off the stage not only of the theatre but of real life? Is it the dishonest man? is it the drunkard? No! It is the hard-hearted man; it is the man with no sympathy; it is the man with no kindness. Let a man be kind-hearted and generous, and there is nothing that he is not forgiven to-day. You will find his victims waiting round the corner to give him another chance. He may break every statute in the Statute Book, but if he is kind and affectionate everything is forgiven him. The popular verdict of the day is that sobriety is a great thing and honesty is a great thing, but "a greater than these is Love."

And if this is so with regard to man's opinion of man, it is even more forcibly true with regard to man's opinion of GOD. Some of us can remember the time when the popular attack upon GOD was that He was a bad mechanician. Some of us have heard attacks upon Christianity, the point of which was that there were many defects

in the human eye as an instrument; and many of us have heard speeches which, if translated into plain language, meant this, that if the speaker had been at God Almighty's elbow when He made the world he could have made it very much better than He did. But now all these speeches—I say it from experience—are out of date. What is the damaging attack to-day? The damaging attack is that God is not a God of Love; the damaging attack is to point to the suffering in Nature, to point to the exterminating wars in the Old Testament, to point to the severe side of the Gospel and to say, "Can you tell us in the face of things like those that God is a God of Love at all?" In other words, the verdict of to-day is, that it is a great thing to have a God of power and a great thing to have a God of intellect, but "a greater than these is Love"; and that if it can be proved that God is not a God of Love a most damaging blow has been inflicted upon the Deity. Now, my friends, this is not the time to meet in detail such attacks as those. If there were time, one might point out that the exterminating wars of the Old Testament exterminated something worse than war itself, and that is the permanent

corruption of the human race. One might point out that God in every age can only get out of that age the morality of which that age is capable, and cannot, therefore, be taunted with the treachery of a Jael any more than the deceit of a Jacob. We might point out that this demand for the God of Love as a matter of history has been created by the Gospels; that the old idea of God being envious, vindictive, as we who had to read the classics know was the idea in old times, has, as a matter of history, been changed into a demand for a God of Love by the New Testament and by the New Testament alone. We might consider the answer of the naturalist who tells us that, as a matter of fact, the animal creation is a happy one, and that it is a fallacy to look on a million animals dying a single death as though one animal was dying a million deaths. And we might look at the answer of the Incarnation which, as one of our greatest poets sums up so beautifully, speaks to us thus—

> "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself."
> —Browning, *An Epistle.*

But we have a humbler task. We have to ask,

first, what Love is; secondly, what has Love done; thirdly, have we got Love, and if not, how are we to get it? And for a very obvious reason we are obliged to take the second question first. There are some things so great and so bright that it is impossible to look at them straight in the face. There are some things which have to be judged and discerned by the shadow which they cast. Why is it that at the time of an eclipse we spend vast sums of money in sending out expeditions to watch it and take notes of it and photographs of it? What is the good of it all? Why, because the sun is so bright that we can learn most about it when it is eclipsed; that as the dark body of the moon steals across its face it throws a great shadow, and the flames which are seen round the circle of the disc explain to us the greatness of the sun and its nature. So it is with Love. Love is so great, Love is so tremendous, that to begin to study what Love is we are obliged to ask first—

I. What has Love done? We have to judge Love first by the shadow which it casts on human history. In answer to the question, What has Love done? old-world stories and old-world

sayings come back to us out of the Bible which we learned as children. "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and it seemed to him but a few days for the love he bore her." "O Jonathan, thou hast been very pleasant to me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of woman." "Then Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took of sackcloth and spread it for her upon the rock, and guarded the bones of her sons from the beasts of the field by night and the fowls of the air by day." They come back to us from that wonderful book of human life, the Bible, pictures which we shall never surpass, of friendship, of the love of man for man, the love of man for woman, and the love of a mother for her boys. And yet they are but the beginning of all the stories of self-sacrifice endured by father for children, by children for father, by brother for brother, and friend for friend; and a great chorus from all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues cries, "This hath Love done."

Nor is it only the love of relatives and of friends. Who is this spare man with the stern, severe face who is searching the arches of London with his lantern? Who is this same man going up and down the factories and the coal-mines?

Who is this same man standing in the House of Commons, with his voice almost choked with emotion after an hour's prayer, pleading for the white slaves of England? This is Lord Shaftesbury. And when we ask, What was it that bore him on, what carried that frail form through all his work, what bent down before him the most cruel and the most selfish opposition, there is only one answer. It was Love, true Love. Not the sham love which merely loves attractive faces or pleasant people; not the sham love that is thinking of itself, but true Love, the true Love which searches for the down-trodden and the degraded, which cares for the ugly and the uninteresting and the very poor. It was true Love which bore him on, and thousands of children to-day echo back with their childish voices the answer to our question, "This hath Love done."

Again, what is this which comes looming up before us on this Sunday?[1] What is it that will loom up before us clearer and clearer during these coming weeks? What is the meaning of this black Cross against the sky, and the figure on it, first dying, and then dead? It must be

[1] Quinquagesima.

a matter of wonder to the angels that mankind, which was redeemed by it, can take it so easily. I believe that what we want to wake us up to something like an appreciation of the Cross is to be with the dying. If you could have come, my friends, yesterday with me as I went to give the communion to a young man in the prime of life who was being choked with cancer, with only two more weeks to live, and if you could have faced death side by side with him, and seen him go up to his death as bravely as any young officer ever went up to the mouth of the cannon, you would appreciate more what the Cross is. If you were more with those who are falling, as it were, off earth, and as they fall into the abyss are caught by the Cross and lifted up to heaven, then it would come over you what comes over some of us at times with overwhelming force, that life would be impossible and hopeless without the Cross.

What is then the answer which it gives? Why do I speak of the Cross to-day as it stands up clearer and clearer before our eyes? Because what the Cross gives is the most overwhelming answer to our question, "This hath Love done, this!" And in the Cross the great Sun of Love

has thrown the longest shadow which it can throw. No wonder the sun hid its face! No wonder the earth quaked!

II. If then Love hath done this, what is Love? We dare to ask the question now, and the first answer which springs from its manifestation in the Cross is, "GOD is Love." That was the revelation which astonished the ancient world, and when we have said it we only half understand it. It seems to mean something like this, that instead of GOD being merely benevolent as many people think Him, instead of His being a GOD who could tolerate sin if He so wished, He is eternal self-sacrifice, that He is always giving—that "My FATHER worketh even up to now," as JESUS CHRIST said, "and I work"—that in the heart of the Godhead there is an eternal compassion and a power of active self-sacrifice. And if that is so, then the scraps of Love we have are the most Godlike things about us:—

> "Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From GOD, Who is our home."

And if the first thing about Love is that it

is Godlike, the second follows from the first, and that is, it is indestructible :—

> "They sin who tell us Love can die.
> With life all other passions fly,
> All others are but vanity.
> In Heaven ambition cannot dwell,
> Nor avarice in the vaults of Hell ;
> Earthly these passions of the earth,
> They perish where they have their birth ;
> But Love is indestructible.
> Its holy flame for ever burneth,
> From Heaven it came, to Heaven returneth,
> Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
> At times deceived, at times oppressed,
> It here is tried and purified,
> Then hath in Heaven its perfect rest.
> It soweth here with toil and care,
> But the harvest-time of Love is there."
>
> —SOUTHEY, "Curse of Kehama."

Could it be more beautifully expressed by an English poet than that? Love is indestructible! What a lesson for our friendship! What a lesson for our family life! What a grand thought that our friendships and our love, if they are pure and true, go on into the other world, and we make friends here to last to all eternity!

And, thirdly, Love is unselfish. That is how you test Love. It has many counterfeits. There is the generous man who gives his cheque, but who is buying a decoration with it. There is the sentimental love which weeps tears over sen-

sational novels, and often is the most selfish thing in the world. There is the Love that simply thinks of itself, that loves to give a present to bring up a bright look on a pretty face, but really is thinking of the pleasure it will bring itself. Opposed to these counterfeits, pale, resolute, stands the true Love, the Love that never thinks of itself, but wholly and solely of the object which it loves. That is the Love of which the Bible speaks, that is the Love we are told to have. "Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not love, I have become like sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. If I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

III. Then, thirdly, have we got this Love? Have we got it as a city, as a Church, and as individuals? Have we got it as a city? I suppose that many would answer that by an eulogium upon the charity of London. We should have flowing articles upon the generosity with which we support our hospitals and our asylums and our refuges. But I have during this last week come across certain facts which I feel it my duty to place before you this afternoon. As the Bishop of East London, it is, I think, natural that,

considering for a thousand years the head of every hospital in Europe was Bishop of the place, the Bishop of East London should take a great interest in East London hospitals. I took first the London, that lifeboat, as it were, which goes up and down the sea of suffering humanity in East London, to cure it and to save it. I thought that the charity of London would, at any rate, be sufficient to support a great institution like the London Hospital.[1] What do I find? I find that the Love of London has allowed a deficit of £30,000 in the last two years; that so cramped are they that they have to build, and yet have no money to build with; and that to carry on their work efficiently at all they want £10,000 a year more. I pass to the Victoria Park Consumptive Hospital, and I pass with the memory of having seen at least fifty of my East-end friends die before my eyes of consumption in the last nine years. I go to the Consumptive Hospital, and what do I find? Out of 162 beds only 60 can be used for lack of funds. One hundred and two patients are passed as suitable, and yet of those 102 none

[1] Since this statement was made several large donations have been made to the London Hospital.

can be taken in. Four women, passed a few weeks ago, have all died before their time to go in came. Those 102 beds are left vacant because the Love of London is not sufficient for the purpose. I go to the Children's Hospital. One would have thought that the charity of a great city would look after its children. But what do I find at the North-Eastern Hospital for children? I find the Hospital crammed with children, and another wing an urgent necessity, and yet the only £2000 which has been given was not given by some one who hates creeds and who goes in for the service of man without creeds, but was obtained from a distinctly Church charity as the first contribution to the new wing. I say, then, that as a city we have not risen yet to the true standard of Love. Have we as a Church? There is a very pathetic sight at this moment to those who have eyes to see, a double sight which one would have thought would appeal to the very heart of every Churchman. For a year and a half one of the most beautiful parish churches in England — Bow Church—has been lying in ruins, and no one as yet has had the care or the charity to build it up. But the coincidence is this, that while for lack of

four or five thousand pounds Bow Church lies in ruins, an old rector of Bow,* whose age is eighty-one, who spent his substance as rector of Bow, in making new parishes and building up the Church of his day, is being allowed to drop into the workhouse, or if not into the workhouse, into a grave embittered by the thought that he leaves his wife and children unprovided for for lack of £2000, for which sum he has had to mortgage his insurance policy. Now, I believe that seldom in the Church's history has there been a more pathetic history than the old church in ruins, and the old rector in ruins, too; and when we ask whether it is possible to say that the Church is full of Love up to the standard of what it should be, those two disgraces, until they are removed, will give the lie to an affirmative answer.

Lastly, then, have we Love in ourselves? If not, we are lost souls. To be without Love is to be without GOD, and to be without GOD is to be lost. Oh, may GOD grant that during these coming weeks, set aside for so many ages for the cultivation of our souls, when GOD seems

[1] In response to this appeal, circulated among friends of East London, £1300 was raised for the old rector, but the church is still unrestored.

to say to us, "I will woo thee, bring thee into the wilderness, and speak to thy heart"—God grant we may have a gift of this true, this lambent flame of Love! We must first ask for it. The old idea of the ancients was that fire was stolen from heaven; but whether fire was stolen from heaven or not, Love only comes from heaven. Ask God to give you Love. We will all ask Him to give us the true unselfish flame of Love. Then, secondly, keep near the pastoral heart of Jesus Christ. Only by keeping our hearts throbbing with His can we truly love. And, at the foot of that Cross, if we ask for love, we shall have the power to live a life of love:—

> "Sing notes of love, that some who hear
> Far off inert, may lend an ear,
> Rise up and wonder and draw near.
> Live life of love, that others who
> Behold your life shall kindle too
> With love, and cast their lot with you."

IV

PENITENCE

"*Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*"—ST. LUKE vii. 47.

THERE is only one subject possible for the first Sunday in Lent, and that subject is Penitence. And yet it is a great change to pass from speaking of faith, and hope, and love, to speaking of penitence. Faith, with its reasoning, creative power; hope, with its marvellous inspiration, and its purifying power; love, that has done so much in the world—all those would inspire the dullest tongue to speak. But penitence is essentially repulsive. It is associated in our minds, as children, with long services on Ash Wednesday; and even to-day, when we are grown up, it is thought by many people to be at once unreal, morbid, and unnecessary.

First, then, and that brings us straight to the point, is penitence unreal? Is this arrangement

of Lent an ecclesiastical masquerade, with mock tears and sighs to order, an arrangement for the production of unreal sentiment and feeling? I do believe that many laymen think so. I do believe that many, who are far too courteous and polite to say so, do think that Lent is all right for women and for Churchy people, but has nothing whatever to do with them. Now, let us admit, and admit freely, that there is among religious people—and we see it among the religious people of London—an immense amount of utter unreality. Nothing is more heartrending and nothing more humiliating than finding, in one's own heart and in the lives of others, the utter unreality sometimes of religion altogether. We cannot wonder that men of the world, who are kind-hearted and straightforward, are entirely set against religion by finding some of us just every bit as quietly selfish, every bit as self-centred, and quite as ready for sharp practice, as those who profess nothing at all. But the question is, Is penitence unreal? And when we look at it, and ask on what true penitence is founded, we find that so far from it being connected with unreality, or from the object of Lent being to exaggerate or stir up unreal feelings, the whole object of penitence is

to grasp facts. And when we have said that, is it not obvious that the case for Lent is established? Some of you have doubtless been seated in a train at a station, and another train has slowly passed you; and as you have looked up, it seems to you absolutely certain that you yourself are moving, and it is necessary for you to look steadily away at the objects on the platform which are stationary to convince yourself that the seeming obvious is utterly untrue, and that, instead of gliding smoothly along, as you seem to be, you are standing stock still in the station.

And so, again, it may seem, at first, an obvious truth that the earth goes round the sun, but it took ages and ages to find it out. The obvious thing was that the sun went round the earth; and it was only by the dint of the most tremendous work, the most careful observation, that it was at last discovered that, instead of the apparent truth that the sun went round the earth, the real fact of the case was that the earth went round the sun. Now, if in regard to a simple truth in nature there is need of these careful calculations, the constant watching by hours in an observatory, surely it stands to reason that, if we are to see through the seeming obvious in our lives and

our characters, it requires just as careful thought, just as careful calculation, to grasp the real truth of the case.

For, as a matter of fact, the man who thinks that his life is perfectly smooth, perfectly complete, the man who thinks that his faults are nothing, he himself is living under the most utter delusion in which a man can live. He has to get apart and carefully watch the laws that surround him; he has to take the law of love, the law of hope, and the law of faith, which Sunday by Sunday we have been considering. He has to take, first, the law of faith. A man thinks to himself that it is a little thing to have thrown away his boyish faith. He started in life, and, bit by bit he found, as often happens, doubts come over him, but those doubts, instead of being what they were meant to be, and properly handled, would have been a means of testing and strengthening his faith, were allowed to overthrow it, and he became what it was at first impossible to think he could become—a practical atheist. Now, how does Heaven regard such an one as that? The angels saw that soul start forth out from heaven with one purpose, and one purpose only. "For this end was I born, and for this

cause came I into the world, to bear witness unto the truth. I came from God, and I go to God." That is the message which every soul ought to have upon its lips: "I came from God, and I go to God; for this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth." But as the angels look down at his place in the ranks, as they look for him in the phalanx of the witnesses of God, they find his place vacant. They say to themselves, "The man who was sent forth to bear his part in the great witness for God in the world has been trodden down by those doubts which were meant, if he had faced them, to train his boyish faith into a man's faith; those doubts he has allowed to crush his boyish faith and his man's faith altogether." It may be, then, that the man who, thinking to himself to-day that his lack of faith is a matter of no account, ought to be upon his knees, with the cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Or, secondly, Hope. Here is another man in this church who is a cynic. He repeats certain stock assertions about the world; he says that it is hopeless to crush out the vice of London. He says—and he says it before boys and young

men—that nothing can be done to stop the division between class and class. He openly says that mankind can never rise beyond a certain point, and he goes to his club, and he is considered there a very good fellow. He is popular with his friends, and he may be, on this first Sunday in Lent, quite under the impression that there is little reason for him to be penitent to-day. But what do they say of him in heaven? They say that he has murdered hope; they say that he has killed beautiful hope, and he ought to be following, with tears of penitence, hope to her grave to-day.

Or, take Love. We spoke last Sunday of love, and I would thank from my heart those three generous souls, one of whom sent fifty pounds for the poor ruined old Rector of Bow, another five pounds, and one who has spent the week in collecting thirty shillings in half-crowns for the East-end hospitals. But it only points the question which I would ask you, as I ask it myself, How many things, during these past three months, have you done solely for the glory of God and the good of your fellow-men? Can we mention one thing that we have done solely for the glory of God and the good of our fellow-

men? I do believe, dear friends, that we want to press this question home. I do believe that the lack of love among us—of real, spontaneous love, love that does not seek its own ends, that looks beyond itself—is the great lack in London to-day. What we need to ask for is a great inspiration of love from the Fount of Love to send us on our way. Penitence, then—if I have proved my first point—is founded on reality. Instead of penitence being unreal, penitence seeks to grasp facts.

Secondly, then, is it necessary? And there comes back in answer to that question the voice of every spiritual teacher who has ever taught the world. "Repent," says John the Baptist, "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." "Repent," says JESUS CHRIST; "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," echo the Apostles. "Repent and be converted, that your sins be blotted out"; and above all, in words that carry a deeper teaching than appears at first upon the surface, "To whom much is forgiven the same loveth much; to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little."

We have, then, provided for us a very easy test

of whether or not we have repented. Show me the woman in this church who imagines that she has little to be forgiven her, and I will show you a woman with no love for JESUS CHRIST. Show me the man who, like Simon the Pharisee of old, wraps himself in his robes of respectability, who loves little, and I will show you the man who needs his heart smitten with the cross, as Moses smote the rock, that the streams of penitence may come forth. The test to-day is the same test as of old: "He to whom much is forgiven" —who thinks that much is forgiven him—"the same loveth much; and he to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Thirdly, then, if penitence is necessary, and penitence is real, is it true that penitence is morbid? There is a morbid religion; there is a religion which is always introspective, which is perpetually looking within itself, that goes about with so miserable and downcast an air as not only to depress itself, but to depress everybody who sees it. "O LORD, make Thy chosen people joyful," is the prayer we need to-day. But, at the same time, it is not penitence that creates that depression. Want of faith, want of courage, anything you will, but not penitence. Penitence

is like a narrow valley that leads the way up to sunlit heights; penitence is the valley of Achor, but it is also the door of hope. Who is, as a matter of fact, the morbid man in this church this afternoon? Who is the man who scarcely knows whether or not he is entering into this service? He is the man—and the experience of all ages gives the answer—who has not repented. He is the man who has not found out where he is. He does not know at all whether his iniquity is forgiven or his sin is pardoned. Happy is the man—this is the experience of the ages—whose iniquity is forgiven and whose sin is pardoned. Miserable is the man whose iniquity is not forgiven because it is unconfessed, and whose sins still cry to Heaven.

What, then—that comes to be the question—are we to do, if penitence, like faith, and hope, and love, is a constituent part of the Christian character, if there is to be woven into this woof of the Christian character the violet thread of penitence, as well as the bright hues of faith, and hope, and love? You and I have to face that this first Sunday in Lent. The practical question is, What is to be done? And the first thing—a very humiliating thing to do—is to get alone

by ourselves and ask two questions: First, What do I think of God? How often do I think of Him? How much does He govern my life? Is He all in all to me? Am I, while I am imagining I am going round God and devoted to Him, making my religion and everything else go round me? Am I making the old astronomical mistake? And, secondly—still more awful question—What does God think of me? Those are the two questions: "What do I think of God?" and "What does God think of me?" And as I ask them I must take my life, if I have never done it before, and I must break it up into parts, into my boyhood, my youth, my manhood; I must take the Commandments interpreted by Jesus Christ, and test that past by those Commandments, with the searchlight of the Holy Spirit. There is no good my playing at Lent; there is no good my coming and hearing a sermon. As we were told this morning so opportunely, take heed *how* we hear. Then, secondly, when I have found out the facts, when I have got through the seeming to the real facts, when I have rectified my position in the spiritual world by this careful calculation, then what is my second step? It is to go and kneel at the

foot of the cross of JESUS CHRIST, and one by one tell out those facts before Him.

I may do it by myself, or, if I cannot in that way satisfy my conscience, I may go, according to the advice of the old Prayer-Book, which enshrines the teaching of the Catholic Church throughout all ages, to "some discreet minister of GOD's Word and open my grief, that by the ministry of GOD's Holy Word I may receive the benefit of absolution, together with spiritual counsel and advice, to the quieting of my conscience and the removal of all scruple and doubtfulness."[1]

The second step of a true Lent, then, either by myself, in the privacy of my own chamber, at the foot of the Cross, or in the presence of another, is that I must confess my sin to GOD.

But, thirdly, I must do it with restitution and amendment. It was a touching restitution that a young man of this congregation made, two Sundays ago, when, with a conscience touched with penitence at his breach of love, and for having murdered hope, he gave fifty pounds a year to the rescue work of the diocese. It is an example to us all, and to none more

[1] Exhortation in the Communion Service.

than the preacher, that true repentance means restitution and amendment: that it is a mockery to kneel down and confess our sins, a mockery to confess a lie, if we do not untell that lie as soon as possible. And one of the great proofs of the good a mission is doing in a parish, as many of us know, is the number of stolen things which are returned, and the number of things which, because the confession has been made in a genuine spirit, produce restitution.

Then, fourthly, having confessed with restitution and amendment, go back a forgiven sinner, with the image of JESUS CHRIST crucified in your heart. People wonder why the Prayer-Book is so full of expressions of penitence. It seems almost unreal to some to say that they are miserable sinners day by day. They do not understand that penitence is a stream which flows up to forgiveness, and then flows underground for ever as a stream of contrition. They do not understand that penitence is an abiding virtue, essential to the Christian life.

I ask you, then, dear friends, to add to Faith Hope, to Hope Love, and to Love Penitence. I ask you to have penitence always flowing

beneath the surface, keeping you humble, keeping you loving, keeping you forbearing to others; and if you do, you will have a grace which, though repulsive at first sight, becomes more beautiful every year you know her. You will have sweet penitence always in your hearts, bubbling up into works of faith, bubbling up into joy and hope, but showing its wonderful power most in that, because it knows much has been forgiven, it loves much.

V

PRAYER

"*Pray without ceasing.*"—1 THESS. v. 17.

IT is sometimes good for our Sunday meditation to take one of the paradoxes or startling statements of the New Testament. And we have not far to look to find them. "Love your enemies," to be reconciled with the possibilities of the human heart; "Give to him that asketh thee," to be reconciled with the problem of the beggar who meets us in the street; "Take no thought for the morrow," to be reconciled with "Except a man take care for his own house he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever"—all these startling statements meet us at every turn, and are evidently methods which the Great Teacher, the Greatest Teacher who ever lived, employed to impress upon a careless world great truths, and which He left with magnificent confidence in us to be balanced by

His subsequent teaching or by the reason which He Himself has implanted in us.

We will consider then a paradox uttered by a great disciple of the Great Teacher, and this paradox or startling statement is, "Pray without ceasing." "Why," some busy man says, when he hears it, "this is a totally impossible command. Pray without ceasing! If I can get a few minutes in the morning it is all I can do, before I hurry down to my business. It is all very well for an apostle or a monk to try such a thing, but for an ordinary man of the world it is quite impossible." Now, before dismissing as a piece of spiritual rhetoric such a command, I would ask you to consider that the apostle who utters it was a man of continuous and strenuous action; he was the reverse of a monk who only had to pray; he was a man who had pouring down upon him every day a mass of work and worry which would make many a man among us utterly ashamed to-day. And yet, looking in the face of all this, and knowing perfectly well what life was, he gives it to every man and woman, boy and girl, as the keynote of their life, "Pray without ceasing."

It forces us to ask—does it not?—first of all,

"What is prayer?" secondly, "What reason have we for supposing that prayer does any good?" thirdly, "Is prayer consistent with the teachings of science and the experience of life?" fourthly, "How are we to set about it?" and lastly, "How is it possible, above all, to pray without ceasing?"

And in answer to the first question, "What is prayer?" the simple illustration so often used that the praying of the soul is like the breathing of the body, is one of those simple illustrations which carry us a very long way. If the praying of the soul is like the breathing of the body, then the first thing it tells us about prayer is that prayer is natural. That, after all, is the fundamental question; that is the question which you men ask yourselves when you find gradually that you are the only one in the office who still goes to church; that is the question which some of you who belong to the clubs of London have to answer when you find that so many of your fellow club members spend Sunday at the golf links, or at Maidenhead—you are forced to ask, "Am I natural, or are they natural? Am I deluding myself into taking a great deal of trouble about something which is totally unnatural; or, on the

other hand, are they living the unnatural life?" Now, if prayer is like breathing, it means this —that man is a praying animal, that man is born to pray, that if you want to distinguish him from all other animals you would choose this most of all, that he is a praying animal, that just as the wing of a bird demands air, and the fin of a fish demands water, so the universal instinct in man demands GOD, and that the true monstrosity in nature is not the wingless bird or the finless fish, but the man or woman who does not pray. We who are early out on the Embankment of a morning watch the diver at his work in the Thames; we see that it is impossible for that man to keep his footing in those dangerous tides, or to maintain his life unless the connecting pipe with the upper air is left open; in the same way it is hopeless to expect men down here in the shifting tides of fashion, away from the air of heaven from which they come, to keep their footing or to maintain their life unless they pray.

I say, then, that the first comfort which this teaching brings is that we who pray are acting up to the nature, the true nature, of man.

And, secondly, see what a light it throws upon

a service like this. What have we been doing in such a service as we have had this afternoon? If prayer is like breathing, then this great congregation has been breathing; just as in breathing we send off from the lungs impure things and draw in the fresh air, so we have been sending off our souls this afternoon the impurities that rest upon them, and drawing in great draughts of the SPIRIT. And the only danger there is in these beautiful services in this church is lest any man or woman should come here merely for the music, should be listening to a beautiful sacred concert, and not in the prayers and in the Confession, expelling from their souls their sins and their shortcomings, and drawing in these draughts of the SPIRIT. If this has been a reality, if this service has been anything better than an empty form, our souls are at this moment strengthened and refreshed by an hour's prayer together, as our bodies would be strengthened and refreshed by an hour's exercise in the open air.

And then, thirdly, it explains this phenomenon — the extraordinary difficulty which a man or woman finds who begins praying again after a long time. There may be men or

women in this church this afternoon who have only just begun again to lead the religious life, who for months, for years, have not said their prayers. You find it very difficult work, my friends, do you not? and perhaps you are inclined to give it up in despair. You say, "It is so hard to pray again; I cannot remember the words; I cannot remember what to say." What it is like is this: it is exactly like recovering a man from drowning. You put him down on the ground, you imitate the signs of life, you expand the lungs, and as you imitate the signs of life, if there is life in him, the life comes back and you say with relief after your anxiety, "Behold, he liveth!" So exactly is it in trying to recover men from prayerlessness, for yourself or any one else; you are working back to nature, just as you are working back to nature with a drowning man. But it is painful for that drowning man to come back; it is with effort, almost with sobbing, he comes back to life. So do not be discouraged, my brother; though you find it hard work, you are working towards nature, you are coming back to life; and if you persevere, if you bend those stiff knees again, and make those dry lips utter a word of honest prayer, the

angels will cry with joy and relief, "Behold, he prayeth!"

"But," you say, "that is all very well, it is a useful illustration, but it is begging the question. How do we really know; have we any reason really to know and believe that our prayers do any good?" And, first of all, notice that we have no reason at all to be ashamed of admitting that we pray because we are told to pray. When the Queen was opening the Town Hall of Sheffield she had put into her hand a little golden key, and she was told as she sat in her carriage that she only had to turn the golden key and in a moment the Town Hall gates of Sheffield would fly open. In obedience to the authority of experts who gave her the directions, she turned the golden key, and in a moment, by the action of electric wires, the Town Hall gates of Sheffield flew open. Exactly in the same way Jesus Christ, whose authority on Trinity Sunday we attempted to justify at some length—Jesus Christ who, on the ground which was stated then, we believe to have come from heaven—must know one thing, if He knows anything, and that is what opens heaven's gates. He must know that, He must know what key

it is which opens heaven's gates; and in His teaching He reiterated over and over again, as if He thought that this was one of the things we should find it hardest to believe, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." And I say that if we are justified in believing in the Divinity of CHRIST, then we are justified in going a step further, and saying that His authority is good enough to make us believe that the golden key of prayer, if we use it, will open the gates of heaven.

But we can go further. As we look back over the history of the world we cannot help being struck by this fact that the men of prayer are the men of power. There is a connection in history between prayer and power. Take, for instance, the great reformer of the present century, who was able to break down the most determined opposition to his reforms, and to free the little children of England from terrible slavery—I mean Lord Shaftesbury. What was the secret of his supernatural power? If you read his life you will see. That man was praying continually. He was praying in the House of Commons before he made his speeches; he was praying in everything he did. It would

not be intelligent reading of biography to disconnect his prayer from his power. Or take General Gordon, who left us the record of a stainless soldier who could stand alone. What gave him the strength to do it? Here, again, we cannot intelligently disconnect his extraordinary power, his extraordinary personal influence, from the white handkerchief outside his tent, so regularly placed there two or three times a day, which meant that General Gordon was at his prayers. Or take the great man we have so lately lost. Who can intelligently disconnect the power of Mr. Gladstone from his prayers? He prayed from his earliest childhood, and he passed away with a prayer on his lips. What a lesson it was, whether we agree with the lines of his policy or not! Continuous prayer brings personal power.

But may I not come a little nearer to this congregation this afternoon, and may I not ask you whether in your experience prayer has not been answered?

"LORD, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchèd ground refresh, as with a shower!

We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
  We rise, and all, the distant and the near,
  Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
We kneel how weak, we rise how full of power.
Why is it that we do ourselves this wrong
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
  That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
  And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

My friends, think of those beautiful lines of Archbishop Trench if you are ever tempted to disbelieve in prayer. Have you not in your own experience known, at any rate, something of that?

But still the eager intellect, the questioning spirit abroad so much to-day, and abroad in our own hearts, asks another question, "Is it possible that the infinite God can attend to my finite prayer? How is it possible for God to answer prayer consistently with being faithful to the laws of nature? And if He wants to give me the good things He promises, and of which you speak, why cannot He do it without my asking at all?" And in answer to that first question, have you ever thought that it is just because He is infinite that He can give each morning his undivided attention to each? We have not grasped the glory of prayer yet, we have not

understood the romance of prayer—if I may use such a word—until we realise that as we kneel down of a morning we have the whole of GOD attending to us. We slip into the idea that there is just a thousand millionth part of Him which attends to our prayer; but if we grasp that because He is infinite He gives the whole of His undivided attention to each, surely that is a glorious thought which would make it impossible for us to miss our prayers at all. The poet Browning puts into GOD'S mouth a beautiful saying in one of his touching poems. When the little cobbler lad who used to pray so regularly gave up his prayer, the ALMIGHTY GOD who was listening in heaven and missed his voice among the voices of the whole creation, says, "I miss My little human praise."

And then, secondly, the question was: "Is it consistent with the laws of nature?" But what are the laws of nature? Merely the observed uniformities in nature. When I take this book and lift it off the pulpit, and place it down again, I make an effort of my will, which by that very action modifies without breaking the law of gravitation. If man, then, the viceroy of GOD, has a power in the midst of a reign of law, by

an effort of his free will, to modify continually, without breaking, the laws of nature, is it conceivable that GOD would not have left Himself the same power? Is it conceivable that the viceroy can be free to do it and not the king? The more, my brother, you think it out, the more absurd you will see it is to suppose that GOD can have bound His own power to answer His children's prayer by the uniformity of nature which He has established.

And when we come to the far more difficult question of why He requires us to pray, if He wishes to give us the things for which we pray, we have again the most helpful analogy in nature. We call coal and gold and bread the gifts of GOD, and rightly. They are the gifts of GOD; but we dig for the one, we mine for the other, and we sow and we reap for the other. We work for them although they are the gifts of GOD. So exactly is it in the realm of spirit. The things we pray for are His gifts: but, for our education—to show we appreciate them, to train us in the relationship of children to a Father—we have to ask for those gifts by continuous prayer. Prayer, then, comes round to be nothing else than work; prayer is work. *Orare est*

laborare, says the Latin proverb. And if it is work, then it is the noblest work a man can do. When the immortal spirit having come from GOD and going some day back to GOD, passes, by an effort of will, into its FATHER'S presence, looks up into His face, touches the sceptre of the King of Kings, it is the noblest work which it can do.

And if it is a noble work, then it must be done first of all with punctuality. If prayer is work, and the noblest work, then how can any man or woman think their times of prayer unimportant? The first thing a man or woman who believes this will do is to see that, whatever else happens in their day, their times of prayer are kept sacred.

And then, again, if it is work, it must be done with perseverance. There are some who give up their prayers because they have so little feeling in their prayers—so little warmth of feeling. But who told us that feeling was to be a test of prayer? Why, I venture to say this, that the patient prayers of the men or women, the boys or girls who have no feeling, but who press on with their prayers with patient perseverance, and walk by faith and not by feeling, are the most

acceptable to GOD, because they cost more; the work of prayer is a far too noble and necessary work to be laid aside for any lack of feeling. Press on, you who are dry and cold in your prayers, press on as a work and as a duty, and the HOLY SPIRIT will in His good time refresh your prayers Himself.

And then, again, if it is work, we must not be selfish over our prayer. We must leave to another time the consideration of the great work of intercession. But remember that the man who only prays about himself is not likely to pray in the right spirit at all. Have we, then—that comes to be the question—in this half-hour's examination, have we learnt in any way to understand how to pray without ceasing? Does it not come out perfectly clear that just as the atmosphere which surrounds the earth in which we live stops the friction of it, and makes life possible, and catches the meteors as they fall upon the earth and burns them out into thin dust, so every single one of us, from the cradle to the grave, has to surround the soul with an atmosphere of prayer. That is the sense in which we are to pray without ceasing—Prayer is to be an atmosphere of the soul, an attitude of the man, a position of the

whole man, that we are never to do anything in life without asking, "Is this God's will?"—never to do any work or spend a single day without living in that atmosphere of prayer, and having the sense of the covering presence of God. And if we do this we carry out the Apostle's command, "Pray without ceasing." Go back, then, my brothers and sisters, go back into the battle of life from which you have come for your Sunday rest, go back determined to be men and women, boys and girls, of prayer. So whatever happens—trouble, worry, or disappointment—you shall have the peace of God which passes all understanding, and whether your lives are great or humble, those lives will not be lived in vain.

VI

INTERCESSION

"*Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*"—ISAIAH lxii. 6, 7 (Revised Version).

WE have spoken of the power of prayer. We saw that, so far from prayer being unnatural, man was a praying animal, that he was born to pray, that the praying of the soul is like the breathing of the body, and that the real monstrosity in nature is the man or woman who does not pray. But a further question, and quite distinct, still remains. A man may say, "Yes, I can quite understand the good of praying for oneself; I can quite see that, according to GOD's will, these gifts of grace are to be worked for by prayer, like the gifts of GOD in nature; but where is the evidence that there is the slightest good in praying for others?" He might even take this line—he might say, "It is presumptuous for me to imagine that I can affect

the destiny of another soul! It is against what I read of the struggle for existence by each individual in nature. It is unfair, for what is to happen to those for whom no one prays? And where is the evidence that intercession for others does any good at all?" Now it seems, my friends, essential, in a place like this, where we spend about five or six hours every Sunday in praying, as well as praising GOD, that we should face and answer these questions, unless, like the augurs of old, we are to smile in one another's faces as fellow partakers in a solemn farce. And in answer to the first question, with regard to the struggle of the individual for existence, if you have read Professor Drummond's "Ascent of Man" you will have apprehended something which is a great relief to the nightmare which settles down upon the mind if one looks upon nature as a mere scene of bloodshed. I know there are men here—I see men here—who have come up lately from Oxford, and I believe that at Oxford, as much as in the great centres of our population, one of the things which drive men to scepticism is believing that nature is entirely cruel. "Where," they say, "is the evidence of a good, benevolent GOD, in the midst of such a scene of

unrelieved bloodshed?" Read Professor Drummond's book, and you will find that side by side with the struggle for existence there is going on perpetually in nature the struggle for the life of others—that the lioness who might crush her cub will die for it, that the parent bird wears itself out in getting food for its young, and that the creative—the marvellously creative—power of a mother's love is not confined to the human species. I am not saying for a moment that such a fact is a proof that when I kneel down and pray for my tempted brother, or he prays for me, that it proves that intercession is of any avail; or that when we told the children that crowded this Cathedral a few days ago to pray for the missionaries it proves that their intercession helps them; but it does answer the first objection, it does give us a splendid hint of what was in the mind of GOD, and it does tell us that, even in the struggle for existence, there is a trace of the benevolence of GOD.

And when, secondly, we turn to the objection that intercession is unfair, and look frankly and fairly at the facts of nature, we find that the unfairness is the other way. No one can visit a children's hospital without seeing in the most

touching form that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children. Some people seem to imagine that that saying in the Bible is an arbitrary command imposing an arbitrary punishment on the human race; but one hour spent in that children's hospital will show that it simply states a fact of human nature. As you see the poor little child die in front of you for no fault of its own, as you see the illness brought on it by its father's sins kill it before your eyes, you see, in a way which you will never forget and can never efface from your mind, that God has disallowed the claim of the individual man to stand on his own base. He shows us that He has bound us together by such ties of brotherhood that no man can live to himself, and no man can die to himself. Why do I say, then, that the argument for fairness tells the other way? Why, because no one can deny that it is a monstrous injustice that that little one should die for the sins of its parents, unless in the brotherhood of man, in the solidarity of humanity, God was preparing some better thing for us which more than counterbalanced the terrible mischief which comes from it. And in intercession, in the death

of CHRIST upon the cross, and His ceaseless intercession, we see what the good was. If a man claims to stand on his own base, then he must give up speaking of being saved by JESUS CHRIST. It is because we are a brotherhood that we can be saved by Another. And we see that GOD's great plan was this: to send through the channels of brotherhood the freshening, reviving grace to press back that poisonous mischief which had come through the same channels. And I repeat that it is a man's sense of fairness, his belief in the justice of GOD, that makes him believe that, if mischief comes through the brotherhood to one another, then intercession, joined to the intercession of JESUS CHRIST, is one of the means by which the influence of others can tell upon the human race.

And this argument is all the stronger when we see the immense influence placed within our reach in daily life in making the lives of others happy or miserable. Take that sick boy lying there down in East London. Who is it that has placed flowers by his side? Who is it to whose visit he is looking forward every minute? Who is it who has been to read to him so punctually day after day, to teach him to draw, and to

help him to get through the long hours of his sickness? It is some woman who, for the love of CHRIST and His little ones, has given up her beautiful home in the country, and, unnoticed and unknown, spends day after day in ministering to another for whom CHRIST died. He has caught from her her faith; he believes now that CHRIST can save him because in a true sense she has saved him. If he stood on his individual base he would have died and despaired, but through his sister he lives and hopes. Oh! the band of the LORD's ministering helpers. With shining garments, to the eyes of GOD, they move about the world. What should we do without them?

"The den they enter grows a shrine,
The grimy sash an oriel burns,
Their cup of water warms like wine;
Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

About their brow to me appears
An aureole traced in tenderest light,
The rainbow-gleam of smiles through tears,
In dying eyes, by them made bright,

Of souls that shivered on the edge
Of that chill ford repassed no more,
And in their mercy found the pledge
And sweetness of the farther shore."

—LOWELL.

But even the influence and the power of the LORD's ministering helpers only lead up to a further revelation, a revelation which I would, GOD helping me, drive home to your conscience and my own, that in the long procession of Christian workers there is a band who come behind the helpers, and who have a power over and above moral influence in daily life, and that is the band of the LORD's remembrancers! What is the meaning of this quaint word which leads you to expect to see some old guild in curious and ancient uniform? Let us look at them at work. And it is a testimony to the antiquity of this wonderful guild, with its strange power coming down from the distant past, that we must begin with Abraham. A guilty city is lying beneath the ban of GOD; but one of the LORD's remembrancers comes forward, and he says, "If fifty righteous be found here; if forty righteous—if thirty righteous—if twenty—if ten?" "I will not destroy it for ten's sake." Or, again, a battle is raging in the plain; the sides are equally balanced; but above the battle on the hill another of the LORD's remembrancers holds up his hands —"and when Moses held up his hands Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hands

Amalek prevailed." Or there is a plague among the people; they are dying by thousands. Another of the LORD's remembrancers puts on incense, and runs in between—exactly what the word intercede means—runs in between the living and the dead; and the plague is stayed. I ask you, as thinking men and women, would it be possible to explain these passages in any other way but this, that the LORD's remembrancers have power put into their hands to move the Hands which move the universe?

But is this the case of an old guild which has lost its power? Is this some privilege which men used to have, but which they have lost? Read the New Testament and see. "We are become kings and priests to GOD," or, as it should be, "a kingdom of priests." "If a man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and GOD shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." Do we look out upon the harvest of the world and see very few labourers going into the harvest? What are we to do? "Pray ye, therefore, the LORD of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." Is it not certain that if those words have any meaning, quite apart from the

help we give others by speaking to them, by giving them help in their hour of need, there is a Divine power put into our hands to bring to them help by our intercession? Did the early Christians believe this? Were they the LORD's remembrancers? Peter is in prison, and the Christian cause has received a terrible blow. What do they do? The LORD's remembrancers get together, and prayer is made continually in the Church unto God for him. Peter is free. St. Paul is in prison. To what does he look? He says, "I beseech you that ye strive continuously in your prayers for me?" And from that day to this mothers plead for their sons, priests plead for their people, and people plead for their priests. The LORD's remembrancers have given Him no rest, and taken no rest until He establish, until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. There were two working men some years ago who were disputing in their workshop. One, who was a little man and without much brain power, was standing up for the Christian cause; the other was a clever, able workman, who kept challenging him to come into any room or any hall, and he would prove the falsity of the Christian faith. The little one, who was not

clever, simply said this, "I cannot argue with you, brother, but I shall never cease to pray for you, that some day you may see things as I do." Years passed by, and that man who scoffed at the Christian faith is a communicant of the Church of England. He was with me last night, and is this afternoon in this cathedral, and if I were to call him up here he would tell you that he now searches the streets where he used to work to find that man to whose never-ceasing prayers he attributes his conversion, in order to give him the happiness of knowing that his year-long prayer has been heard.

I say, then, that one thing comes out of all this investigation, and it is this—that there is a kingly, priestly power put into the hand of every Christian—that every baptized and, still more, every confirmed Christian, is the LORD's remembrancer. It is a kingly power, because it gives us the right of saying like a king, "I will." When any young boy, nay, any child, kneels down and simply and earnestly prays for another, that prayer is countersigned by JESUS CHRIST and swept into His intercession, and avails with GOD. On the other hand the power is priestly, because it means this—that just as Abraham pleaded for

Sodom, just as Moses pleaded for God's people in the battle, just as Aaron ran in between the living and the dead, so—O awful yet glorious power!—we may plead for the guilty: so we may help to decide the battle: so we may run in between the living and the dead. That is the first thing which comes out as certain.

And the second is this. If it is so, what monstrous waste of power there is in the world! I look down on this congregation and I ask you this question: How often during this past week have you put forth this kingly, this priestly power? And will you not honestly answer, "Hardly at all?" Our hearts were wrung lately by the news of the great calamity at Blackwall. If one of you had been down there, and had been able to stretch out a hand to those drowning people, or knew that by a push forward you would push any of them into safety, is there a man or woman in this congregation who would have denied their brothers and sisters that help? Then it means that if you do not give this priestly, this kingly help to the tempted in London—if the girls in London, under awful temptation, keep going to the bad; if the boys fail beneath the fiery temptation to which many

of them are exposed ; if the missionaries in foreign countries give up their work in despair, it is partly because you and I who have the priestly, kingly power to help them fail in our duty.

I ask you, then, to add to the work of prayer the work of intercession. First of all, have a regular time. I have no doubt there are many here so busy that they find even a few minutes difficult. But if all this is true, it is the duty of the busiest man to find a few moments to put forward his priestly, his kingly power.

Secondly, have a definite list of those for whom you intercede. Begin with your family, begin with your friends ; but do not stay there. "Take no rest, give Him no rest until He establish, until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." We want more unselfishness in our intercession ; we want to send our hearts out over the whole world. Have a prayer every day for foreign missions, and pray on Sundays for the home Church.

Thirdly, remember a special blessing is promised to united intercession. "When two or three shall agree touching what they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My FATHER which is in Heaven."

Fourthly, make the Holy Communion the great intercession service that it ought to be. In the Holy Communion we plead the great sacrifice which can never be repeated. As Joseph's brethren held up the blood-stained coat before their father to tell him in a touching way that Joseph was dead, so in the Holy Communion we hold up as it were the blood-stained coat before the FATHER in heaven.

> "Look! FATHER, look on His Anointed face;
> And only look on us as found in Him;
> Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
> Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim;
> For lo! between our sins and their reward
> We set the Passion of Thy SON, Our LORD."

We come then round in the end to where we began. "Ye that are the LORD's remembrancers, take ye no rest and give Him no rest until He establish and until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." It is often disheartening work. We seem like the poor widow who was not heard; we seem like the man to whom the selfish friend would not open the door. The stream of intercession trickles on, and no one seems to heed and no one seems to care. But if these things are true of which we have spoken, something does

happen. Just as you dam up a stream in order to accumulate the water power, and for a long time the stream trickles on and the valley underneath remains dry and desolate; but when you look out later you find the brown things have become green again, and the dead things alive, and you wonder what it means; and you find it means this: that the great tide of water has burst its bonds at last and is off down that valley on a work of blessing—so it is with the stream of intercession. It trickles on all the time; the power rises—slowly rises—and some day men will look out upon the world, and they will see dry souls freshened with grace, they will see heathen lands converted, and they will wonder what it means: but we shall know that the great tide of prayer has burst its bonds at last and is off down the valley on its work of blessing.

VII

CHARITY[1]

"*He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?*"—1 St. John iv. 20.

IT has often been pointed out that an untrained imagination is a chief cause of doubting the Christian faith. When the honest and high-minded thinker, Mr. Darwin, confessed with sorrow that, owing to the exclusive use of the analytic reason, he had lost his taste for poetry and music, he was revealing an observation in human nature as important as any he ever made in the habits of the earth-worms and the fertilisation of grass; and the observation amounts to this, that the imagination may be atrophied by the exclusive use of the analytic reason, that the imaginative power of the brain loses its force by not being used, and that the

[1] Preached on Hospital Sunday when the Judges attended the Cathedral in state.

great conceptions of music, poetry, and religion fail to appeal to an imagination which has lost its grasp. There is nothing in reason against the belief that the Son of God came down from heaven and took a human form on earth, but to an imagination which cannot rise above the petty details of the newspaper it appears incredible. In our text to-day we have put before us another cause of doubt, and that cause is an unsoftened heart. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?"

We divide men up into body, mind, heart, and will; but as a matter of fact our very powers of analysis mislead us. A man may be in a sense analysed in this way, but

"A man's a man for a' that,"

and he cannot leave one part of himself untrained and undeveloped without throwing out of gear the whole man. For instance, there may be in this church this afternoon a high-minded man who represents in every way the noble tradition of a great service. He has a lofty contempt for all that is mean and sordid; he is the soul of honour; he has no cynical doubt about him;

he may have no pride; he is to all appearance a scrupulous man and stainless gentleman, and yet he may be acutely conscious that he has very little love for God. Love for God—why, if he were quite honest he would say he had only the vaguest and most general belief in God at all! It would be impossible to say that it was through lack of imagination, for he is fond of music, appreciates poetry, and adores art; and it might have seemed that here was a man who would rise with keen appreciation to an active belief in a Great Being, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," Who satisfied his sense of justice, Who, as the Creator of nature, has shown Himself a great Artist, and Whose extraordinary act of self-sacrifice, as related in the New Testament, might have been expected to have stamped itself for ever on his quick imagination; but there is one part of him all the time which we should be forgetting, and that part is the very part out of which we are told are "the issues of life." His heart is wrong; he is a cynic; he does not in the least love his brother whom he hath seen; he has seen too much of him; he has watched the world with shrewd and careful eye,

and has lost his belief in human nature; the suffering of life has come so often before him that he has become used to it—in his experience it is generally the man's own fault; the streams of sympathy which used to flow so freely have dried up; he has been deceived so often that he has become a hard man; because so many appeals are unworthy, appeals of every sort are placed with conscientious regularity in the waste-paper basket; opportunities of personal service become fewer from pressure of work, and—almost without knowing it, and certainly to his regret if he did know it—his love for his fellow-man dwindles lower and lower in his heart, and with it in exact proportion fades away the vision of a GOD Who claims his love—and all in exact accordance with the prophecy of the text, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love GOD Whom he hath not seen?"

Now, it would indeed be a terrible thing if love to GOD were inconsistent with a love of justice, inconsistent with a full use of reason and a high standard of human character; but, thank GOD! we have too many instances of how all four may be combined to make it impossible

for any one to imagine that such qualities are inconsistent with one another. To take only one instance, familiar to some here, of one who not long ago passed to his rest—I allude to Mr. Justice Denman. I suppose no one could deny his sense of justice, his shrewdness and his high standard of what a man should be; but we younger men who carried on missions in London never looked to him in vain for sympathy or help. His heart was like the heart of a child; with all his experience of life he never lost his belief in human nature, his love of boys and girls and children; and many is the evening which in later life he would spend in East or South London, throwing himself with the zest of a boy into what was going on, having an informal talk to the working men, and cheering the workers in the district; and it would be a shallow judgment of character that did not connect his love of his fellows with that child-like faith in God, that humble trust in His mercy and goodness which was his to the last hour of his life. We are bound then to ask, if we are honest with ourselves to-day: Do we, as a matter of fact, love or attempt to love, or do anything by way of showing we love,

our brother whom we have seen? And, if not, may this not be the very reason that we have so little love to the God Whom we have not seen?

It so happens that there are two reasons which make it an appropriate question to ask ourselves to-day. At certain times in the history of the Church such a question might have been met with the retort, "But where am I to find my brother whom I am seeking to know? If it is my poor brother who is referred to, I do not see him; I do not come across him; I live on one side of the town and he on the other—and where am I to begin among so many? Where is the personal touch to come in?" And it was the difficulty which underlay this retort which has been met during the past fifteen years by University, School, and College Missions. The reason of the happiness of such houses and settlements planted in the poorer districts of our great city consists in this, that the richer and the well-to-do, the educated and the leisured, may pass naturally and easily, without patronage and without suspicion of patronage, into the presence of their poorer brother. At the Oxford House any one who has lived

there for nine or ten years would have seen this mixing of classes at close quarters, and could testify that nothing more natural, nothing more easy on both sides, nothing more likely to break down the exclusiveness of the one class and the prejudice of the other could be devised than this meeting of brother with brother, of man with man, which takes place day by day in this settlement. One of the latest started and which has great promise of success is the Inns of Court. There the young barrister will find his brother, as the young Oxford and Cambridge men have found theirs at the Oxford House, the Cambridge House and Toynbee Hall. There the leaders of the profession will find a new bond of sympathy with younger members in their common work, as the heads of the Universities have long found a new link with undergraduate life in a united effort to help those who are brothers to them both; and if the experience of the one effort is repeated in the other, they will find a proportionate increase of love to God for every stroke of genuine work to help their brother. Many men who have come to East London full of doubts about God, and

theoretical uncertainty about the revelation by CHRIST, have worked off their doubts by the simple process of working for their fellow-men. The Gospel which seems so far away when looked at from an arm-chair at Oxford was a different thing altogether when seen in action, and the sight of a brother's face looking back in gratitude and sympathy gave a new reality and clearness to faith in the unseen GOD which had almost vanished from their life.

And the other reason which makes such a question appropriate to-day lies upon the surface. It is Hospital Sunday, and the needs and the pains, and the groans of our poorer brothers come before us with a claim which nothing can resist. And it comes before us first with an appeal to the historic character which Christians have possessed from the earliest times. We know how strong an appeal it is to an old family which can trace back its pedigree generation after generation when it is called upon to be true to its own name, to carry on untarnished the glorious record it has brought down from the past. That is the first ground of the appeal of Hospital Sunday. It has

been said that the Christian Church is the oldest fighting regiment in Europe; but it is something even better than that — it is the oldest Red Cross Society in Europe for the relief of suffering and distress. It is possible, of course, to overstate the case for Christianity as the first originator of hospitals. We Christians hold no brief to prove that mankind was destitute of natural feeling before CHRIST appeared in the world. On the contrary, it is one of the fundamental tenets of an enlightened faith, that CHRIST illuminated the world before He came, and in addition to revealing new light focussed into new force when He appeared the scattered rays of old truth. We note, therefore, not with dismay but with satisfaction, that at Athens a daily subsidy of two *obols* was given to citizens who were blind, or lame, or maimed, and that the orphans of those killed in battle were supported by the State. Buddha in India preached strongly the duty of kindness to animals, and a Buddhist king, 250 years before CHRIST, established hospitals for animals, and, as some think, for men and women. As to Rome, we must make the most of the shelters round the temple of Æscu-

lapius for those who came to pray to the gods, and of the charitable bequests which are recorded in inscriptions to native towns. But we must put against that the equally certain exposure of children to die, and the cruelty shown so frequently to slaves when they were sick. Indeed, it may be truly said that throughout antiquity it was the citizen and not the man who was remembered, and that it was the brotherhood of man as man, the claim which one suffering man has on the help of his fellow, just because he is his brother man, which was the unique teaching of JESUS of Nazareth. When a Seneca can say, "Pity is morbid and unworthy of wise men," and when an impartial historian like Mr. Lecky says that the active habitual charity of private persons which is so conspicuous a feature in all Christian society was scarcely known in antiquity, we can begin to gauge the revolution which Christianity has worked in the sentiment of Europe. It began with CHRIST Himself coming, as we believe He did, from heaven to gladden the souls of the poorest and saddest. Nothing ever daunted His hope; nothing ever cooled His love. He touched the leper whom no one else would touch, and, as Mr. Lecky so

beautifully says, "the records of those three short years have done more to regenerate mankind than all the measures of statesmen and all the disquisitions of philosophers. Fired by His example, the society which He founded passed into the world, consumed with a passion to relieve human suffering. Vast organisations of charity, directed by the deacons and presided over by the bishops, soon ramified over Christendom. While the pestilence raged at Carthage, and the pagans fled panic-stricken from the contagion, the Christians rallied round their bishops, and soothed the last hours of the dying. Italy becomes a monotonous tale of famine and pestilence, but there amongst the chaos and the desolation was to be seen the majestic form of the Christian priest straining every nerve to lighten the calamities of those around him. It was a Christian bishop who founded the great hospital in Pontus; it was a Christian empress who was the first hospital nurse; it was a Christian woman, a disciple of St. Jerome, who founded the first hospital in Rome. Since then you may trace the course of Christianity in the hospitals and such like places it has set up. If it has succeeded in doing nothing else, it has for ever united in the mind of man

the idea of supreme goodness with active benevolence."

Am not I right then, my friends, in saying that the honour of the Christian name is at stake with us to-day—that with this splendid tradition behind it, the wealthiest city of the wealthiest Christian nation the world has ever known has to live up to a high standard of Christian generosity? For the last nine Hospital Sundays it has been my lot to plead the cause of hospitals from a stand in the open air to working men who were only earning a pound or two a-week, and for the last nine years, in shillings, and sixpences, and pennies, the collection round that stand has been over fifty pounds. I ask you what is the proportionate collection from a congregation such as this to-day?

And the second ground of appeal is the appalling need of hospitals. If I could bring to your imagination some of the scenes at which I have been present during the last ten years in the East of London, you would understand the need of hospitals. I can see before me now a girl gasping her life out on a heap of rags in a hot and stifling garret, with no one to moisten her parched lips. Only picture that girl in a cool hospital ward

with a nurse at her side day and night, with cooling drinks and the best physicians at her disposal, and then think what the hospitals are to us in East London. Or look at that boy who went with splendid courage to his work morning after morning after an attack of lung-bleeding which would have kept us to our beds for weeks —what are we to do with him when he collapses at last, deluging the workshop with his blood? That poor foreigner who can scarcely lisp a word of English, when he was run over in the road, what could we do with him if it were not for the hospitals? There they stand, sanctuaries of help to the suffering, none the less Christian to-day in their purpose than a thousand years ago when the bishop was the house governor of every hospital in the world. They are a standing witness in a selfish world of selfless devotion and an undying test which we cannot avoid, however much we try, as to whether or not the brotherhood of man is anything to us but a form of words. In the name, then, of the 1,755,000 patients, men, women, boys, and girls, who came to the hospitals last year; in the name of the 238 Londoners who die every day, one every sixth minute; on behalf of the daily sick-list of

173,874, itself greater than the population of Brighton, Cardiff, or Bolton; by the consideration of the 400,000 who live in single-roomed tenements to-day—and think for a moment what that fact alone means; by the generosity of our ancestors who pay to-day ten shillings out of every pound spent in the hospital for us; by the glorious tradition of the great Christian society to which we belong; and above all, by the sacred name of our most holy Redeemer, the Good Physician of body as well as soul, I plead this afternoon with you to see in these sufferers brothers and sisters you are bound to help—nay, to see in them the face of JESUS CHRIST Himself. And when once we have seen that, the argument is closed, the claim of to-day becomes

> "Right of which we may not rob Him,
> Debt we may not choose but pay,
> Lest that Face of Love and Pity
> Turn from us another day."

VIII

ONE GOD AND FATHER

"*One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*"—EPHESIANS iv. 6.

AS we have lately read in the thrilling accounts of the great battle which our soldiers have been fighting in the Soudan, when the long-expected battle drew near there appeared out of the city—the doomed city, as it turned out to be—a spectacle which, in all probability, the world will never see again. There appeared an army, three miles long, in perfect order and perfect discipline, with banners floating over them, inspired by one faith and by one spirit. The sun shone on them, making the steel glitter in the sunshine, and the noise of the advancing host was, as one writer has described it, like the ocean breaking upon the shore. A young Englishman, writing home to his parents to describe the sight, said it sent the fear of GOD through him. And the fact that a courage

as great as theirs, a discipline more perfect, and arms more scientific crushed them as they came out of the city must not blind us for a moment—it did not blind our soldiers, who always recognise the courage of their foes—to the wonderful spectacle which was presented. Now such a disciplined, organised host the Christian Church was meant to be. "As terrible as an army with banners," that is the Scripture phrase. And when we turn to JESUS CHRIST'S last prayer we find that what He prayed for was this, that His army, which was to go forth, was to be one, "As Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." And that moreover it was to be so visibly one that the world—which can only see visible unity—was to fall down astonished at the spectacle and believe, because of this unity, that GOD had sent His SON[1] to be the SAVIOUR of the world. In other words, JESUS CHRIST'S ideal of His Church was then and is to-day that of an army so perfectly disciplined, with "One LORD, one faith, one baptism, one GOD and FATHER of all," that by its terrible

[1] "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."—ST. JOHN xvii. 21.

unity and its resistless strength it should send the fear of God through all the human race, and bow down all souls before the majesty of God.

Now it is not my intention this afternoon to bewail the bitter mockery which Christendom presents of Christ's ideal. It is rather to point out that two dangers beset that ideal. On the one side there may be substituted for it the far weaker ideal of mutual toleration between unorganised regiments. That danger the Church of England endeavours to avoid by safeguarding the unity of Christendom. Our friends among the Nonconformists—and thank God we have many of them—sometimes wonder why it is that we, who are their personal friends, cannot come and preach in their pulpits, or ask them to preach in our pulpits. It is because in the Church we consider it our duty to safeguard the ideal of Jesus Christ, that believing as we do that He desired and prayed for visible unity, we cannot therefore officially sanction schism as a principle in the Church. We meet our friends most gladly on every common ground. We work with them in the open air, we work with them in the cause of temperance

or on any other common ground which we can find. But believing as we do that we have been entrusted with this great trust of keeping the ideal of JESUS CHRIST of the visible unity of one organised society before the world, therefore it is that, with the Catholic tradition in one hand and an open Bible in the other, we hold fast the faith in the prayerful hope that one day all Christendom will be united under the banner of the Anglican Communion. But the other danger is an even more pressing one to-day. Who can doubt that minds are perplexed at this time, who can doubt that the minds of our laymen reading the discussions which have taken place in the newspapers are terribly puzzled to distinguish between the fluttering pennons of a party and the great standards of the Church of GOD. They are not behind the scenes, and they do not know that out of, say 200 churches in East and North London, the whole discussion only touches about six, and that the great body of the Church are going calmly and bravely to their winter's work entirely undisturbed by any controversy at all.

I propose, then, this month to upraise Sunday by Sunday the great banners of the Christian

Church, to see to what we are pledged, and under what banners we are fighting, that so as we mark together the bloodstains upon each, the blood of the martyrs who have fought for it and died, we may see what bearing each has on our Christian life, and we may go into the winter's work with new hope and new courage. And the first banner which the Christian host carries in the forefront as it goes into war is the one which I have taken for my text—"One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Perhaps when I have read the inscription there may be a feeling in your hearts of disappointment. "What," you say, "is that all that we are going to hear about to-day? Why, that is a matter of course! We all believe in a God. Surely there is something more distinctive about the first banner of the Christian Church!" First, then, let us look at this banner's history, and see what men have gone through who have brought it down to us. This was the banner and no other that Abraham carried, as he went out, not knowing whither he went. This was the banner, "one God," for which he fought, and for which he was a witness in a world that

believed in gods many and in lords many. This was the banner Jacob kept hold of in his exile, and that Joseph wrapped round him in his prison; this was what that battered race of Jews — thousands of whom live in our own midst, and whom we treat constantly with far too little thought and consideration— lived through their long persecution to hand on to the world. People puzzle themselves constantly over Old Testament difficulties. They puzzle themselves as to why Jael was praised for killing Sisera, over the bloodthirsty wars which are mentioned in the Old Testament. But what they forget is this, that the Old Testament is a record of how the Jewish race was gradually taught its great secret, how it slowly learned it, and at last, after centuries of persecution and exile, handed it on to us. No, my friends, we owe a debt of gratitude to the hundred thousand Jews that live in our midst to-day. Let us remember that they were the first to bear witness to one LORD and FATHER of all. From their hands, as the representative of their race, and as the one Catholic man, JESUS CHRIST takes the banner. Ask what He taught, ask what it was that was in the forefront of His

teaching, and you will find it was this: "One GOD and FATHER of all." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly FATHER give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" "The very hairs of your head are numbered." Remember, the one precious lesson which He was trying to teach the world was that every son of man has a loving FATHER in heaven, and the one chief banner He commanded His Church to preserve was the banner we raise to-day—"One GOD and FATHER of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." And do you suppose that some of us have not to fight for it now? Look at that workman in the workshop of London bearing witness, often under a hail of persecution, for his faith, "You go to church; you read your Bible; you are a religious man." And he stands there, brave and persistent in his faith, ready to add his martyrdom to the blood which stains the banner as it waves over our head. Yes, a noble history is the history of this banner. Then, secondly, think of its meaning; ask yourself where you would be if you started this winter without it? There are many anxious hearts

in a place like London at the beginning of a winter; there are in East London, at any rate. "Shall I get food enough to feed me? Shall I lose my work? Shall I have strength given me to keep my little home together?" And while the poor have anxieties so have the rich. There must have been many an anxious heart for the "boys" sent out to the war in the Soudan, and I ask you, in our anxieties, where should we be if it was not for "one GOD and FATHER of all?" "We are"—the late Dean of St. Paul's in one of his beautiful sermons said—"we are like children lost on a dark common at night." Like children lost on a dark common at night! That is exactly what we are. Rich or poor, how do you know what is going to happen to-morrow? We have no idea at all. And if you think it out, our one hope and thought is this: "One GOD and FATHER of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Or take the mourner. We mourn to-day with our own Royal Family for one dear to them who has been taken from them, and we ask ourselves where we should be as we see our dear ones pass away—and some one dies in London every six minutes—unless we could commend them to "one

God and Father of all," and not to a blind force? To hand them over to some power we know nothing about, at the centre of all things, is one thing. It is another, as the life goes out of the dear face and the last breath leaves the body, to hand the loved one to "one God and Father of all." "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit"—that is the cry which cheers the mourner. Or, take the thinking man who is in this church this afternoon—a man who has read a little of philosophy, and knows what philosophers of all ages have tried to find. They have tried to find the central unity round which everything turns. We have not found it if there is not one God and Father of all. Or, take the worker. We go forth this winter to do each our little bit of work. But what a patchwork it all seems; of how little avail it seems, the little that any one of us can do! It makes all the difference if we believe that there is one God and Father of all. He takes up our little bit of work and works it into His great pattern, and when the sampler is turned over at the last we shall be able to see where our little patchwork comes in. No; if we think it out and go to the bottom of things to-day we shall see that

this is no commonplace banner, not something which is a matter of course, but a banner for which thousands have shed their blood, a banner without which we are of all men most miserable.

Now comes the question whether we in our heart of hearts believe this. Do we really hold that belief in one GOD and FATHER of all? Let us be perfectly frank. The difficulties of believing it are immense. I hold here in my hand an extract from a paper which gives an account of the great hurricane in the West Indies.

"At nine o'clock," says the writer, "on the fatal night, the wind was blowing with hurricane force. The sky, which had been of inky blackness, was now one mass of quivering brilliancy, continuous electric waves leaving the sky a lurid hue against the hillsides, and down the valleys the electric fluid flowed like shining streams of quicksilver. The waving branches were one moment a mass of silvery light, the next they vanished in the black pall. Between eleven o'clock and midnight the storm reached its height. The barometer had then fallen to 29.462, and the velocity of the wind for one mile was seventy-five miles an hour. The roar-

ing of the wind deadened the sound even of the thunder, and the strongest houses swayed to and fro continually. Rising out from the villages ever and anon between the bursts of the wind, accentuating them with tragic effect, came the cries of the poor people whose frailer houses were being swept away. The crash of trees, the shrieks of the inhabitants, mingled with the roar of the elements, impressed the mind with a sense of horror and helplessness rather than of fear—a feeling deeply implanted, never to be forgotten. . . . At 2 A.M. the storm had spent its force, and the floodgates were opened, and the miserable ruins were deluged." Then the writer goes on to describe how one poor little smiling child, little knowing its danger, was floated out to sea, and lost for ever.

Now I take that as a sample of what comes before us time after time. "Where was GOD?" Where is GOD when that poor sufferer is dying hour after hour of cancer? Where is GOD when thousands are lying in suffering to-day in our London hospitals? Where was GOD when the Midland express, dashing on its way, purely, as the world says, by accident, was wrecked over

an obstacle which dropped from the platform? My friends, we must face these things. I believe half the want of keenness about religion is because we do not think out our problems. Look first at pain. Is pain an argument that there is no GOD and FATHER of all? On the contrary, pain is a danger-signal; pain is one of the things given us by a loving FATHER for our good. Ask the workman, who picks up the white-hot iron and drops it in a moment because of the pain, whether he preferred to lose his hand and have no pain. Ask the woman, who sends for the doctor because of the pain which the congested lung gives, whether she would rather die of congestion or have that pain. Ask the doctor what guides him to where the mischief is. He will tell you time after time it is the pain that guides him, for the patient could not tell him where the mischief was without the pain. He would little know how to remedy the evil. Pain then is a danger-signal, and a blessing in disguise. Without pain there would be far worse suffering. Or ask some hospital nurse, who has had experience in some great hospital, what she has seen pain do for character. For seven or eight years, every

week it was my own privilege to visit a great hospital, where I have seen pain convert souls time after time. I have seen men who would have thought nothing of GOD, who would have gone to their death without prayer at all, brought to their bearings in the wards of our hospitals by nothing but pain and suffering. And yet helpful as these thoughts are, let me be frank with you. It would be impossible to really believe in the kindness of GOD in face of pain and suffering if it were not for the banner we are to consider on Sunday next: "One LORD JESUS CHRIST." If GOD had not come down unto the thick of human suffering it would have been a difficult thing to believe in His love. But we can, thank GOD, trust Him when He comes in the form of the suffering LORD JESUS CHRIST. As we see GOD Himself suffering human pain we can respond to His appeal when He says, "Take it on trust a little while," for we can add with confidence—

> "*Soon shall we read the mystery right*
> *In the full sunshine of His smile.*"

But this pain and suffering, you say, seems to be a matter of chance. It seems all left to chance.

I hope that some of you read that able article in one of our leading journals on that very Midland accident to which I have already referred. The writer shows that there was not an element of chance in the whole accident. Every part of it was either an act of deliberate choice, or was worked by a law that could not fail. But what we really mean when we complain about "chance" is this: "Why does not GOD stop His own laws in order to prevent an accident? Why does He not put out His almighty hand to turn that express from its path in time to prevent the accident?" But if He did we should no longer be able to trust to the uniformity of Nature. What science calls the uniformity of Nature faith calls the fidelity of GOD, and to interfere to-day with the law of gravitation and stop an express rushing on its way would be to bring upon the universe an accident ten times as terrible as that accident which we deplore. No, GOD cannot for our own good be always interfering with His laws. What we do believe is this: GOD is in the accident; He is there, picking up the wounded, soothing the sufferer, taking those who die to a home where there shall be no more pain for ever; and behind

these natural laws, behind these accidents, holding the world in the hollow of His hand, GOD is still (παντοκράτωρ) "all sovereign," "one GOD and FATHER of all."

Time fails to deal with other difficulties. What I would say in conclusion is this. This great belief drives us to three things. It drives us first to a life of peace. Do you want to be at peace? do you want to be calm in your work, and steady in facing the future? Then believe in one GOD and FATHER of all. This paper which I have here, the appeal for peace which the head of a great empire has made to us in the most solemn way, I say we are bound to treat with the utmost respect. Surely if we really believe in one GOD and FATHER of all, then however long it may be in coming, we must remember to pray that the children of GOD may live at peace among themselves. Secondly, it drives us to prayer. If a man came into this church who does not pray I defy him to go out of it, if he believes in one GOD and FATHER of all, without praying. Thirdly, it drives us to work. How can we interpret the inequality of men's lives, the physical comfort of West London, and the poverty of

the East—except as a great call to the children of GOD to pass on whatever they have in trust to the poor who have it not. To believe in this banner means to be a never-failing, a persevering worker in the cause of Christian charity. Let us go forth, then, every one of us to our winter's work with a new belief in our banner. Let us go forth to work out the brotherhood of man in the light of the Fatherhood of GOD. And assuredly when the hosts of GOD pass into the world beyond the grave the first banner to be planted in the Promised Land will be this banner which has nerved them in despair, comforted them in sorrow, and saved them in death. "One GOD and FATHER of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

IX

ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST

"*One Lord Jesus Christ.*"—1 Cor. viii. 6.

WE are left with four unanswered problems, and letters received during the week from members of the congregation have shown how deeply they are felt. There is—

(1.) The difficulty of reconciling the suffering in the world with the goodness of God

(2.) The horrible fear that God has lost control over His own world, and that He is powerless over the hurricane when it comes across the world.

(3.) The question whether or no there is a break in the darkness of death?

(4.) The ghastly inequality in the lots of men.

And perhaps it was just as well that we did not attempt before to try ultimately to solve

them, for without the second banner of the Christian Church they are insoluble; as Dr. Liddon used to say in a pregnant phrase, "It is my Christianity which safeguards my theism," or in other words, we have no certain ground for believing in one GOD and FATHER of all, if we do not also believe in one LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Such a statement of course may seem surprising, but take those four problems alone, and is it not true?

(1.) Take the suffering of the world, and imagine for a moment that GOD has done nothing; watch that man slowly dying of cancer in the throat, and imagine for a moment that GOD has done nothing to show His sympathy, that He has appointed this torture but felt none of it, and however much you may talk, and talk truly, of pain as a danger-signal, I believe that it is impossible not to feel in your heart of hearts that GOD has been, as Tennyson describes in "The Lotos-Eaters"—

> "On the hills like gods together,
> Careless of mankind."

I believe it impossible to have any passionate love of God, any love which would inspire and justify those daily glorious praises which rise from this church, if He had remained out of the world all the time, and simply watched from a distance, "sinking ships and praying hands," and if the sound of the world's anguish had been to Him

"A tale of little meaning, though the words are strong."

But once accept in its full meaning the truth which this second banner of the Christian Church has held aloft for eighteen centuries, in spite of all the scorn and unbelief of an incredulous world, and you have something which sends you on your knees with awe and gratitude.

If that quivering form, beaten with a Roman scourging; if that agonised figure bowed on the black Cross was the very God by Whom all things were made, and without Whom was not anything made that was made; then light, the light of love, bursts in; then we can believe that suffering has a purpose, for God bore it Himself;

then if the leader bears the worst, the troops can bear it too.

"The very GOD! think, Abib; dost thou think?" cries the Arab physician to his friend in Browning's famous poem—

> "So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
> So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
> Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
> Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of mine,
> But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
> And thou must love me who have died for thee!'"

(2.) Or take the second problem—Is there any sign of a power behind the tempest?

We can bear any trial if we are sure that it is being allowed for a purpose. We can understand if it is the working of a natural law which the highest wisdom sees better to leave alone; but we cannot bear it and keep our faith in one GOD and FATHER of all, if we are creatures of resistless forces which have broken out beyond control; we cannot bear it if we are flies on a great wheel which is driven by the devil or worked by mad chance; we cannot believe in one GOD and FATHER of all if we are the mere sport of the elements, or pawns in a game of chess, with an

unseen adversary, who, as Professor Huxley used to say, "never sleeps and never passes over a mistake." What is there then to reverse the picture? what is there to lead us to suppose for a moment that there is a controlling arm behind it all? and a million voices answer, "One Lord Jesus Christ," and a million hands point to the second banner of the Christian Church. "And Jesus arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm, and they said, What manner of man is this, that the winds and the sea obey Him?" It either was or was not true; if it was not, then all we can say is this, that there has been no arm stretched out from behind the veil—

"Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful;"

the floods may wash us down, and probably will for aught we know, and the one God and Father of all has shown little power to protect His children; but if it was true, then however fiercely the winds blow and the waters rage, there is still the arm which once appeared which holds them in control; however sparingly He may alter law, yet what we call law is

merely the method of His working, and though the widow may lose her son in the tempest, yet he has not sunk beneath the waves any more than the sparrow has fallen to the earth "without our FATHER." It was a true instinct that wrote, "It is I, be not afraid," on the tomb of a young man killed by an avalanche.

(3.) Or, again, apart from accidents, take the common doom of death; one by one we see our friends go down to the dark valley. "Good-bye," we say; "farewell." "Ah! would we could keep thee, my brother." But no, he goes; he goes unwillingly, he goes inevitably to the "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

No traveller returns! then are we of all men most miserable; then the little light which has illumined the darkness of death has been quenched, and the FATHER'S face has been hidden. But the Christian host corrects the saying, "No traveller, but one"—one LORD JESUS CHRIST. He entered the same dark valley. He said farewell like the rest; but He came back, not with a little span of life allowed Him like Lazarus, but He came back with garments splashed with

blood as one that treadeth in the wine-vat; and when we ask Him, with the prophet, "Who is this that cometh from Egypt with dyed garments from Bozrah?" He answers, "I have trodden the winepress alone, therefore Mine own arm brought salvation."

And like a fire among the stubble runs the story through the Christian host, and is caught up every Easter and pealed from 400 churches in Moscow alone, and thundered from 100 guns in St. Petersburg, and crashed along Europe in Easter hymns of triumph, "He is Risen, He is Risen; JESUS CHRIST has conquered Death;" and through the dispelled darkness appears once more the Face of one GOD and FATHER of all.

(4.) Or take the inequality of life—

We take the omnibus for half-an-hour in one direction, and spend the afternoon in lofty houses and pleasant parks and spacious rooms; we go half-an-hour in the other direction, and we spend the afternoon with the sick in narrow rooms, with no comfort and scarcely enough air and water, and you are asked to believe that there is one GOD and FATHER of all, Who loves all His children equally and looks after them all alike.

And the cynic smiles; it looks so like it, the

treatment is so impartial, the arrangement so transparently fair. No wonder that the man who has nothing but his natural reason to guide him rejects the whole idea of the Fatherhood of God as an empty fraud, and the brotherhood of man as what the clergy live on.

And what is the answer we Christians are to make? It is not an easy one.

It is true we may still answer, "One Lord Jesus Christ;" we may still point to the manger bed and One Who lay in it, Who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor;" we may show how little God cared for the difference between poverty and riches by choosing, with a magnificent disregard for riches, poverty as His bride; but the Babe in the manger looks up at us for all that with blue, inquiring eyes.

Is that all it means? Is it nothing more than this, ye that pass by, that the supreme Captain of the Heavenly Host and Lord of Creation should lie in a manger among the cattle? And these words come back to us: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you"; "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

In other words, the inequality of the world from the Christian standpoint is the opportunity for generous giving, and that not the easy giving of money without inquiry or thought, but the passing on of faith and character and life by a patient and persistent stewardship.

There is only one explanation of the inequality of the world consistent with a belief in a good GOD, and that is that the minority have these things in trust for the world. "Where is Abel thy brother?" is the first question those of us brought up as Christians with time, money, and education will be asked. "You were one of the minority, but there was a life linked with yours; where is he? If you have used up the supplies, he must be fainting." And it is only by finding Abel and sharing our life with him—as settlers in the great slums do themselves, and others do through them and the parish clergy—that we shall be able to answer at the last, "Here am I, and here is Abel my brother."

II. But of course it may be said, and said truly, that in all this we have left out of sight the difficulties of the miracles; you are giving us a miraculous CHRIST after all.

(*a.*) And the answer is that there is no other

CHRIST except the miraculous CHRIST. Go back to the earliest accounts of Him; analyse, if you can, the Gospels into the one central account which underlies them, and the one most certain fact about Him is that He worked miracles; He worked miracles if He did anything.

Do you want to take His teaching by itself? it is embedded in miracles; do you want the discourse of the bread of life? it is founded on the miracle of the 5000; the liberal teaching about the Sabbath? it is occasioned by a miracle on that day; will you keep Him as the great Philanthropist and Inspirer of Hospitals? they were inspired by His miracles of healing; the non-miraculous JESUS CHRIST is a fiction of the brain of the nineteenth century.

(*b.*) But miracles never happen! They do, every day.

"The wonders that I see in Nature," says Professor Huxley, "make the miracles of the Church child's play by comparison; virgin procreation, resuscitation from apparent death, are ordinary phenomena for the naturalist." [1]

[1] Extract from private letter, quoted in a note at the end of Gore's "Bampton Lectures."

And if there is one thing more than another to be learnt from the lecture of another great professor[1] lately delivered, it is the little we really know in science about anything, especially the principle of life. It is the small men who dogmatise; it is the small men who talk about the glorious light of science having illuminated for ever the dark problems of the world; the big men talk humbly and reverently of a few scattered hints here, and a ray or two there, to guide them on their way through the unfathomed darkness which broods over the ultimate mysteries of the world.

(*c.*) The truth of the matter is that there is only one real miracle in the world, and we all believe in it—and that is the miracle of life itself.

At one period of the world's history life appeared; no one knew what it was or how it came, but when it came it was a break in the uniformity of nature greater than anything which either has occurred or could occur again.

To restore life is nothing to creating it; to heal the sick and cure the blind is child's play to saying "Life" and there was life, and yet there

[1] Professor Virchow.

is not a soul in this church but unfeignedly believes in the miraculous mystery of life.

Why then, dear brother, do you hold back from a full acceptance of one LORD JESUS CHRIST, in consequence of a disbelief in miracles when you yourself are a living miracle of His Divine Power far greater than any miracle He ever wrought on earth?

III. And this leads us up to the other side of the full meaning of the banner. After all is said and done, a Christian does not only mean by "one LORD JESUS CHRIST" that JESUS CHRIST is the only explanation of the problems of the world, still less that He was unique as a wonder worker; he means far more than this, he means that He is unique among the moral forces of the world. When we ask ourselves how it is that one born of obscure parentage, in a narrow Jewish race, humanly speaking with a stain on His birth, is to-day the leading influence in Europe, towering on the plain of history so completely that the greatest emperor or hero of the day is a mere pigmy by His side, we are face to face with the moral miracle of the world. CHRIST is that moral miracle, and it is the Christian's boast and glory that He is; He

not only satisfies the human conscience, but He educates it while He satisfies; and even John Stuart Mill can say with candour, "There is no better rule of life than so to live that JESUS CHRIST would approve of your life."

Brethren, what think ye of CHRIST, whose SON is He?

No question tests our character more than this: not to think much of Him is to stand self-condemned as a moral idiot, to think Him good and not GOD is to say that the humblest and gentlest soul that ever lived could say without loss of His humility, "I and My FATHER are one," "He that hath seen Me hath seen the FATHER;" to think Him good and not try to follow Him is to throw away the only chance we shall ever have of reaching goodness, and so of reaching heaven.

Study the life again; impregnate your soul with the atmosphere of the Gospels; look again from lesser masters to the peerless Master's Face; take Him as your leader, your example, your guide for every step of the way, and you will answer that question with increasing sureness.

"Thou art the King of Glory, O CHRIST,
Thou art the everlasting SON of the FATHER."

X

ONE SPIRIT

"*One Spirit.*"—EPH. iv. 4.

"THOU art the King of Glory, O CHRIST, Thou art the everlasting SON of the FATHER." These were the words with which we concluded our last meditation on the second Banner of the Christian Church, but during the week many may have been thinking, "Yes, that may all be true, and I see no flaw in the argument; it is clear that JESUS CHRIST is the only explanation of the problems of the world. He is, in His miracles, only showing the power which He has already displayed in the miracle of life, and He has clearly shown Himself to be the one Catholic Man who not only satisfies the human conscience but enlightens it while He satisfies; He does stand alone in the pages of history, like a great column on a flat plain—solitary, prominent, colossal.

"But after all is said and done, I cannot bring it home to myself; it does not really impress me; it is not part of my life; I cannot deny it, I do not wish to deny it, but I find fifty things more interesting, and it is far off like a beautiful dream, or like a story which has lost its meaning —where is the Power which can bring it home to me and make me a genuinely religious man or woman?"

Or another says: "It does appeal to me, but it is my prayers which are at fault. I can hardly be said to pray; my thoughts wander directly I kneel down, and though I have never given up the habit of kneeling down, it is often a mere form. What I feel is wanted for me is something or Someone to revive my prayers; some breeze to come down on the dead embers of my spiritual life and fan them into flame; some power to come into me and pray in me when I cannot pray myself—

> "Oh, for freedom, for freedom in worshipping GOD,
> For the mountain-top feeling of generous souls,
> For the health, for the air of the hearts deep and broad,
> Where grace not in rills but in cataracts rolls!"

Or yet another may say: "Where I am so weak is in the feeling of human brotherhood. I

know I ought to feel more kindly towards those of another class to myself, but I cannot help feeling that the poor are often very ungrateful and bring their poverty on themselves; I cannot say that I really feel that the man in the street is Abel my brother; that the Nonconformist as a man is often better than the Churchman: I want something to fill me with the Spirit of Human Brotherhood—a Power to soften down my prejudices and expel my selfishness, to stir me with a zeal and love for souls, and make me desire ardently the lost unity of Christendom, and look on it as something far more precious than personal comfort or personal advancement —a Power to make me wish to see on earth a brotherhood of man in the light of the Fatherhood of GOD."

And to all these yearnings and desires the Church has one answer, and she gives it as she comes forward with her third Banner, "One Spirit."

And before we consider how complete is the answer which it gives, let us make certain that we really know what the banner means. To water down the third great banner of the Christian Church to mean nothing more than harmony of

spirit or unanimity, is to dangerously weaken what ought to be the strongest element in our religious life; no wonder, then, if our spiritual life is poor and thin. "One Spirit" means nothing short of this, that, just as in the fulness of time, the Eternal Son, Who had from all eternity been in the secrets of the Father's counsels, Who had been the agent in creation, Who had made all things, and without Whom was nothing made that was made, came forth to carry out their joint plan of Redemption with the cry, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God"; so also in the fulness of time from the heart of the same Godhead came forth God the Holy Spirit; and with the sound of a rushing mighty wind and with tongues of fire He came forth and tabernacled on earth as God the Son had done. This and nothing less is the awful truth, that He is as really on earth now as Jesus was in the home of Bethany, that He has never gone back, that there is an Ascension Day for God the Son, but that there is no Ascension Day for God the Holy Ghost.

I. What then is it that the Christian Church believes?

(*a.*) First that He is a Person — that He

comforts, strengthens, guides, loves—as only a Person can.

(*b.*) That He is a distinct Person; at the Baptism of JESUS CHRIST, GOD the FATHER says, "This is My beloved SON." GOD the SON is in the water; but GOD the HOLY GHOST descends in bodily form as a dove, distinct from the other two Persons of the Godhead.

(*c.*) That we live under His dispensation now; that these are the times of the HOLY SPIRIT; and that we might as well describe a home and leave out the mother's love, as describe religion and leave out the "One Spirit."

That then is the great meaning of "One Spirit."

II. In what way, then, does He affect the three difficulties of which we spoke, which often destroy the religious happiness of so many; how is "One Spirit" the secret of a peaceful, loving, and progressive religious life? We see in a moment by looking at the functions the Spirit came into the world to fulfil.

(1.) He came first, we are told, "to take of CHRIST and show Him to us"; He was to make Christianity real to us; He was to take of the Cross and bring its meaning home to us, and so

convict the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; He was so to work upon our hearts as to make us cry each to ourselves as we look at the Cross: "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

(2.) He was to give us the sense of the Fatherhood of God and help our infirmities in prayer. He was to be "the Spirit of GOD whereby we cry, Abba, FATHER." "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit prayeth *in* us with groanings that cannot be uttered." He was to inspire our worship; the worship, for instance, in this church was to be part of a great circle of inspired praise; as the water drawn up from the ocean in the morning forms into clouds and falls upon the earth in rain and returns by the rivers and streams to its ocean home, so the one Spirit inspiring praise and prayer was to come from heaven, form in the heart where room is found for it, spring to the lips in overflowing words, and return to the ocean of God's love with gathered praise. We were to "pray in the Spirit."

(3.) The express object and aim of the One Spirit was to draw us together, to make the

world good and to make it one, and who can doubt that the increasing sympathy between class and class of the last fifty years, and the almost passionate desire for the unity of Christendom, is the direct result of the revival of the spiritual life among us which has been such a marked feature of the last half century, and is to be attributed to the work of One Spirit?

Are we, then, that comes to be the question, are we trusting to the power of the One Spirit to do these things for us, and if not can we wonder that they are not done? "If no man can say that JESUS is the LORD but by the HOLY GHOST," then if we do not invoke the aid, and rest upon the power of the HOLY GHOST, who can be astonished that we say that JESUS is the LORD with a vagueness and weakness, born of the effort to say it by ourselves?

III. What, then, are we to do in order to put ourselves in connection with the moving Power of the Spiritual world?

(1.) And first, very simply, we are told to ask for Him to come; we are told in the plainest way, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your FATHER in heaven give the HOLY SPIRIT

to them that ask Him?" But prayer, remember, is not a mere matter of words; to pray in the Name of JESUS CHRIST is not merely to say "for JESUS CHRIST's sake." To pray in the Name of JESUS CHRIST is to pray from the point of JESUS CHRIST's attitude towards the world. A wife can use her husband's name on condition of her loyalty, and the Name of JESUS CHRIST can only be taken on the lips of those who are at least trying to live in His Spirit. So to pray for the HOLY SPIRIT means to put yourself in a frame of mind to which the HOLY SPIRIT can come.

It means—

(*a.*) *Self-examination.*—How can the HOLY SPIRIT come to a heart surrendered to the lusts of the flesh or the fascinations of the world?

(*b.*) *Surrender.*—How can the HOLY SPIRIT come to any one unless he is ready when he sees it to obey the Will of GOD?

(*c.*) *Obedience.*—We must use the ordained means by which He comes.

It is curious how some find it possible to contend that Confirmation is not in the Bible.

What, we ask, was the laying on of hands in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles?

"Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the LORD JESUS" (Acts viii. 17, 16); or in Acts xix. 6, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the HOLY GHOST came on them." The laying on of hands is named among the elements of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. vi. 2), and is probably alluded to often in the New Testament under the name of "the seal" or "the unction" of the HOLY GHOST. Surely there must be some strange misunderstanding which has led to the neglect of what for 1900 years has been the unbroken tradition of the Christian Church, and for 1600 years the invariable practice of all Christians.

Surely it is a singularly beautiful idea that the seed planted in Baptism should be matured and watered by the warmth of loving Christian teaching, until it expand at opening life into a flower; and as the flower of the young soul opens out the petals of its spiritual life consciously to GOD, that down upon it should come the strengthening grace of the One Spirit Who first planted the seed. "And when they laid

their hands upon them, the HOLY GHOST fell upon them."

But some may say, "Ah yes, if Confirmation was a reality, but I was so hastily prepared, I can scarcely remember my confirmation at all." Here then in St. Paul's Church sounds St. Paul's message, "Stir up the gift of GOD, which *is* in you by the laying on of hands" (2 Tim. i. 6). I speak to some who were confirmed long ago—the gift is still in them by the laying on of hands. Possibly you can remember the day when religion was a greater reality to you than it is now. What if the light received then has been allowed to die down to a dead ember? "Stir it up into flame," it is not altogether dead; lift off what is pressing it down and bring in the fresh air again; utter the old beautiful prayers, "O send forth Thy Light and Thy Truth that they may lead me." "Let Thy loving Spirit lead them forth into the land of righteousness."

IV. But as was well put in a letter this week, suppose you do all this, and pray for guidance to the "One Spirit," and then apparently are guided wrong? What are we to say? I believe that far more are discouraged by this

than by any other cause. We can only say that—

(1.) There is no promise at all that the immediate results of the guidance will appear.

A clergyman came to me six months ago, and reported that a great blow threatened his parish in the loss of certain buildings. I did all I could to avert this blow, and so did he, but unsuccessfully—the result of prayers and effort had been apparently in vain; but he reports this week that, contrary to all his expectations, the loss has been of the greatest possible spiritual gain to the parish—the thing was guided right after all.

In each case, we must hear what the years and centuries may say against the hours.

So, again, take the Bible. What a strangely roundabout way it seems for God's book to be put together; documents left to the mercy of the world; written by gatherers of figs, shepherd boys, prophets in rough raiment; a collection of poems including even a love poem; maxims of moral philosophy; memoirs and a few letters. Who, for instance, could possibly have known that the Revelation was to be the last chapter of a book of which Genesis was to be the first? and yet what grand counterparts they are of one

another: the gates to the Tree of Life are closed in Genesis; they are open at the end of the story.

What is it all but the slow working of One Spirit, One Spirit who used the writers not as His pens but as His penmen, who took them just as they were, with their prejudices and misunderstandings and imperfect knowledge of geography and history, and using them as they were, wrote the Bible? There is no better instance of a striking result achieved at last by "One Spirit."

Or take a long tract of one's own life, and see if after all life is not its own evidence. Have any of us, say for the last twenty years, continuously referred matters to GOD and prayed for the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT, and do we not see that we were guided right, that as a matter of fact we were saved there from a tremendous danger, drawn back here in time, and taught a lesson without which it would have been impossible to have lived the next stage of our life?

Let us then go forward with "One Spirit" as our watchword. "As many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD," and that is equally true of statesmen and men of

business as of clergymen or sisters of mercy. Be led by the Spirit of GOD at every stage of the way, depend on Him at each step, and the "One Spirit" will speak to you of the One GOD and FATHER of all, and bring home to you the One LORD JESUS CHRIST until He bring you to the One Home at last.

XI

ONE BODY

"*One body.*"—EPHESIANS iv. 4.

OUR last subject, you will remember, was "One Spirit"—one Spirit whose blessed task it is to bring home CHRIST to the soul, to refresh our prayers, to guide us every step of the way, until He leads us home. "May Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness"—that was our final prayer.

And I would I had time to reply in detail to all the questions and perplexities, especially on the subject of prayer, which have reached me during the week. As the best answer I can give I would recommend every one with difficulties about prayer to read a clear and cheap and simple book by Canon Gore, "Prayer and the Lord's Prayer," a book that has already helped many, and which will deal with most of the perplexities and difficulties which are being felt by members of this congregation. And the

reason it is impossible to deal with them to-day is, that we have set before ourselves a special object in these meditations on the banners of the Christian Church. It is to disentangle the essential from the accidental, to disengage from a host of party flags the great standards of the host, that so we common soldiers of the Christian Church may rally more confidently round the banners that float over our heads, and understand more clearly what it means to be a Churchman. And we only follow the guidance of St. Paul when we include among the things which we cannot give up, and for which we must be prepared to die, a belief not only in One God and Father, One Lord Jesus Christ, One Spirit, but also One Body.

I. No one can deny that Christendom at present presents a spectacle which is absolutely the reverse of One Body. With the organic Church itself split into three divisions—Roman, Greek, and Anglican, none of them in communion with one another; with 250 sects in England alone, it is obvious that "one body" is about the last image which would suggest itself to an independent inquirer as descriptive of the Christianity of to-day.

And many, seeing the impossibility of reconciling the two, have taken refuge in the idea that after all St. Paul did not really mean one body, but that so long as Christians of all denominations live in charity among themselves, and teach without quarrelling their distinctive doctrines, that this is all that any one can expect; indeed, some go further, and urge that the competition of organisations and variety of opinions add a pleasant piquancy to religion, and stimulates the activity of all.

Now in opposing this view with all the force at our command, we Churchmen do not wish to speak with the slightest disrespect of those who hold it. It is held in England to-day by many good and holy men, and let us thank GOD that there are great central truths, such as the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection, which all Christians hold in common.

But our reasons for opposing it are—

(1.) That it is *unscriptural.*

Such a unity might be a unity of spirit, but by no possibility could it be called a unity of body.

As we have already seen,[1] the unity prayed

[1] Page 106.

for by CHRIST was to be so visible that the world was to learn the fact of the Incarnation from the visible unity of the Church. "I pray, FATHER, that they may all be one; even as Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me."[1]

A Nonconformist minister who was present on that first Sunday has urged, with graceful courtesy, both in a letter and in a long private conversation, that the union between the FATHER and the SON was not organic, and that the Greek word for believe means "to learn to know."

As our LORD did not speak in Greek, it is impossible to press too closely the subtle meanings of a Greek word, but I still should answer that the words express the closest possible unity, and that the world could not learn to know a thing until it could be seen, that such an interpretation is alone consistent with the teaching of St. Paul, who speaks of the Church as the Body of CHRIST, the fulness of Him Who filleth all in all, and as if to make perfectly certain that it is not a unity of Spirit, adds as the fourth banner "One body."

[1] St. John xvii. 21.

(2.) It is contrary to *common sense.*

When the Germans were marching upon Paris, is it conceivable that they would have deliberately marched in three great battalions under different orders, and with two hundred and fifty disconnected regiments marching where they liked?

It is only custom which blinds us to the ridiculous sight which Christendom presents to-day from a common sense point of view.

(3.) It is *unhistorical.*

Such a view never occurred to the mind of man, or was conceived by the wit of man for sixteen centuries.

When the Gothic invasion burst upon the civilised world in the fourth century and broke up the Roman Empire, there was only one thing which survived the shock, and that was the Christian Church. Scattered up and down Europe, often feeble, young and immature, it was organised, it was visibly one, with its creeds, its well-known symbols, its ordained ministry of Bishops, priests, and deacons, its devout laity with their voice allowed and encouraged in its councils, it stood the shock of the incoming waves like a flexible, wattled breakwater, and by a glorious and irresistible victory, converted its conquerors.

At a later date, when Europe was torn with feuds and hot with bloodshed, the one power which could strike up the swords and proclaim a "Truce of God," the one power which, with all its defects and limitations, was felt as a restraining hand, and heard as a voice from another world, was organised Christianity, already twisted in its organisation, but strong because still one. That the Church must be "one body" is the teaching of history as it is the teaching of Scripture and of common sense.

(4.) I oppose it as a working missionary for nine years in East London.

Wherein lay the weakness of our aggressive work in the open air upon the open foes of Secularism and Paganism? I say, without a moment's hesitation, in the divisions of Christendom; in the fact that there were six or seven people teaching different things about religion at the same time.

"What am I to believe, sir?" said an inquiring working man. "The one says my children must not be baptized, you say they should; one says the Pope is everything, another calls him Antichrist; here is the Roman Catholic, the Congregationalist, the Baptist, the Wesleyan, the Ply-

mouth Brother, the Salvationist, and the Church of England."

"When you have settled among yourselves what is right," was the Secularist's invariable reply, "we will consider the question of becoming Christians."

(5.) It is the standing difficulty in the mission field.

"Never imagine," writes an earnest clergyman from South Africa, "that disestablishment makes the slightest difference to the dissensions of Christendom. There are only a few thousand people in this township, but there are six chapels of different sorts beside the Church, and though we are entirely disestablished, the bitterness is far greater than at home."

And the fact that in China those devoted men and women in the China Inland Mission have had to divide up their district into different parts, and assign one to each denomination which compose their mission, is, one would have thought, sufficiently puzzling to the inquiring Chinese, and a *reductio ad absurdum* of the "One body" of St. Paul.

It is clear, then, that on grounds of Scripture, of common sense, of history, of mission work at

home and mission work abroad, "one body" must bear the sense of an organised society, united by visible bonds, with one LORD, one faith, one baptism, one GOD and FATHER of us all. And in support of this we have the happiness to quote one whose voice on this subject will reach to quarters where no other voice would reach In a pamphlet which all should read, entitled Mr. Gladstone's "Testimony to the Catholic Faith,"[1] we find these words :—

"God forbid that, by our asperity and rancour, or by our narrowness and exclusiveness, by our obtruding matters of opinion into the region sacred to matters of faith, by our setting up standards of orthodoxy more extended or more rigid than those which GOD has commanded to be used as such, the auspicious day should be averted or postponed, in which the children of all Christian Churches should kneel around a common altar, and, receiving from the same hands the Pledges of Salvation, should again be one, even as they of old were one, and as He, with Whom in all things they seek to be identified, would have them to be one for ever."

[1] Edited by Mr. George Russell.

II. What then are the bonds which are to bind this great society together?

(1.) First, "one Baptism."

That baptism was laid down by the Founder of Christianity as the means by which every child of man was to be admitted into His Society is a proposition which I suppose no one would deny: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all creation." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD;" and that the kingdom of heaven sketched now as mustard seed, now as leaven, now as a net, describes the many-sided activities of the visible Church, is obvious to most thoughtful men.

But what men fail to see is that Baptism pledges them to unity. They are visibly baptized with one baptism as a sign to all the world that the society is one; and every soul here to-day, if baptized with water in the name of the Holy Trinity, whether baptized by a nurse on a sick-bed, or by a Nonconformist in his chapel, is a member of the Christian Church.

A question was asked this week whether one baptized as a Swedenborgian was a member of the Christian Church; the answer is that though

Baptism by one not in Holy Orders is irregular, it is not invalid, and that every one baptized with water "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," is a member of the Christian Church.

Here, then, is a real visible bond of unity at last; here is the ground of hope for the future. On that poor fanatic's brow, as he storms and raves against the Church, is something which marks him to the angels as a member of the Church: "Ye are all the children of GOD by faith in CHRIST JESUS. For"—notice the reason—"as many of you as have been baptized into CHRIST have put on CHRIST" (Gal. iii. 26).

"Why then break up the one family into disordered groups?"—that is our appeal. "Why tear the seamless robe of CHRIST?" It is the gathering of the baptized into separate communities which makes the schism; the baptized individual is a member of the Church, it is only by standing with others apart that he becomes a schismatic.

Ah! would that the Wesleyans of to-day, to say nothing of others, could say with their founder, "I live and die a member of the Church of England—the Church of which I became a member at my Baptism."

(2.) The second bond is "one Ministry."

I have already quoted one sentence from the great statesman so lately gone to rest, let me quote a few more, bearing on his belief in "one ministry":—

"The Apostolic Succession.

(1840) "The Bishop conveys the power of administering Sacraments, whereby the Church is constantly replenished with children; of ordaining Priests, by whom Sacraments are administered; and of consecrating Bishops, by whom in turn these powers may be communicated anew to others, who may replace the actual holders, and hand them on from one generation to another. In this line, therefore, alone it is that the effectual principle of continued propagation is carried down from the Apostles of Christ to the latest age."

"We have, therefore, still among us the ordained hereditary witnesses of the truth, conveying it to us through an unbroken series, from our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles. This is to us the ordinary voice of Authority; of authority equally reasonable and equally true,

whether we will hear or whether we will forbear; of authority which does not supersede either the exercise of private judgment, or the sense of the Church at large, or the supremacy of the Scripture; but assists the first, locally applies the second, and publicly witnesses to the last."

(1840) "The Church of England gives credibility to her doctrine, and clear authority to her ministrations, by the fact that she teaches no articles of faith but such as have been drawn out of Scripture by the universal consent of the Church from the beginning, and that she is to this day historically the same institution through which the Gospel was originally preached to the English Nation—preached then, as it is preached now, by the ascertained commission of the Apostles of CHRIST, and through them by the Will of CHRIST Himself."

(1895) "The Church of England, I am persuaded, will do nothing, in regard to faith and discipline, to compromise or impair her character as the Catholic and Apostolic Church of this country."—*Gladstone's "Testimony to the Catholic Faith."*

As that great statesman and historian knew

so well, Apostolical Succession is a fact, whatever value we attach to it; and this only value we claim for it this afternoon, that it is the backbone of the one body, that without a moment's break the belief of the first century (as asserted by Ignatius) has always been the belief of the Church and is equally its belief to-day.

"Let no Eucharist be valid but such as is celebrated by the Bishop, or one appointed by the Bishop."

"Reverence the Deacons as JESUS CHRIST, the Bishop as the FATHER, and the Priests as the Sanhedrin of GOD—without these there is no Church."

(3.) As the third bond of union of the one body we must place "one Faith."

The laymen of the English Church are often puzzled as to their test of membership in the Church; they have not much time to read, and they vaguely believe that to be Churchmen they must subscribe to the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Hymn, and the Thirty-nine Articles. Now, as a matter of fact, while it would be an excellent thing if laymen were to know and study those valuable documents by which their teachers are bound, and in accordance with which they must teach, the only creed by which the layman is

bound is the Apostles' Creed. It is this which is the inventory of our faith, every word of it is founded on the Scriptures and is to be proved thereby; it is simple, clear, and forcible, binding together the baptized into a unity of mind as well as a unity of heart, and giving with one baptism and one ministry the third thing needed to fulfil the ideal of one body.

III. What, then, in conclusion, are we to do to restore this lost ideal, and hasten the fulfilment of our LORD's last prayer?

(1.) *We must hold fast to the ideal.*

Because it seems so impossible to-day, we must not lose hold of the great thought that some day, knee to knee, and shoulder to shoulder, with one swing, one hope, one impulse, Greek, Roman, Anglican, Wesleyan, Congregationalist, Baptist, having laid aside, on the one hand, unsupported claims, and recovered, on the other, lost privileges and re-acknowledged old truths, will, with a force and a power the world has never seen before, sweep iniquity and scepticism and crime out of the way of the coming LORD, and then will be fulfilled the prophecy of the hymn we sing so often —

> "But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day,
> The Saints triumphant rise in bright array;
> The King of Glory passes on His way.
> Alleluia."

(2.) *Pray for it.*

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Here is an unselfish prayer, an ennobling prayer which lifts us out of ourselves, and which appeals to the "One Spirit" to work out in the world that oneness which He must long to see there; one Spirit must desire to see one body.

(3.) *Work for it.*

We each can do our bit. Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour be put away. Each understanding to what he is committed and explaining it to his brother, and the brother passing it on to the one next him, that is the way for us to work until we all come to a knowledge of the Son of God, to a measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and be all joined in one Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him Who filleth all in all.

(4.) *Avoid playing with Rome.*

There are few, very few, compared with the great mass of loyal Churchmen, who do it, but these few are hindering re-union; to introduce mediæval inventions into the fabric of the Christian Church, or books of devotion full of Mariolatry, is not only to be untrue to the branch of

the Church to which we belong, but to delay reunion perhaps by centuries.

(5.) *Avoid short cuts to Reunion.*

To attempt reunion by throwing over any portion of the Catholic faith, to say that orders do not matter to please one, or sacraments to please another, is to make reunion impossible from the other side. But if the English Church holds Catholic tradition in the one hand, and an open Bible in the other; if she keeps to the grand motto which has been hers from the beginning, "The Church to teach and the Bible to prove"—if with complete grip of the whole faith we stand foursquare to all the winds of heaven, then the world may yet see the sight which shall convert her, and bow her down in mystery and awe; beneath the banner of the Church of the English speaking race, Christendom shall be united—the prophecy, "I will give thee as an ensign to the nations," will be fulfilled, and the sun will never set upon a Church which is "one body" at last.

XII

ONE BREAD

"*One bread.*"—1 Cor. x. 17.

WE have arrived at our last Banner, and fortunately it is a comprehensive one. There are many things in our minds to-day; the presence of a great danger[1] has quickened throughout the country the sense of unity, and as always happens now, thank God, in this country, all party spirit has vanished in the thought that we are, after all, brother Englishmen; further, it is Citizen Sunday, on which we are specially asked to consider the bearing of our Christianity on our duties as citizens; and, thirdly, those who have been following this course of simple meditations on the Banners of the Christian Faith will be looking for the last one, which they will know, as Churchmen, must

[1] The country was at this time much stirred over the question of Fashoda.

be included—the banner on which we inscribe our belief in the words of our SAVIOUR before He died: "Take, eat, this is My Body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of Me."

One Bread, then, is an appropriate motto at this time.

(1.) It gives the explanation first to that sense of brotherhood which has been stirring so strongly in our veins during the last fortnight, and which was felt in only a less degree when our brothers of the same race across the Atlantic were themselves engaged in another enterprise to rescue the oppressed. The Anglo-Saxon race is one Bread. It is sometimes argued that patriotism, so far from being a virtue, is actually a bar to the realisation of the brotherhood of the whole human race; but surely such an idea is —

(*a.*) First of all a fallacy akin to the fallacy that no one must love his mother too much for fear of interfering with his love to CHRIST.

It seems clear in both cases that GOD's idea was not that we should lose the lower love to reach the higher, but that through the full use and enjoyment of the lower love we should rise to the higher; that, as Plato taught us long ago, "We must rise from the love of one to the

love of the two, and from the love of two to the love of all fair forms, and from the love of all fair forms to the love of the eternal loveliness;" and that, if we may slightly turn the argument of St. John, "He that loveth not his white brother whom he hath seen, how can he love the dark one whom he hath not seen?"

(*b.*) And when we look at Christian history we see that CHRIST was a patriot: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together;" "Salvation is of the Jews;" "Preach the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem." St. Paul was a patriot: "I am of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city;" "I could wish myself accursed for my brethren according to the flesh;" and although engaged for the truth's sake in a life-long conflict with them for the truth, he was through it all "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" to his dying day. It has been, then, a GOD-given instinct which has been stirring in us these past days, a divine instinct capable, doubtless, of being blent with base alloy; capable of issuing in mere pride of race, in vain-glory, in contempt of others, but in itself coming from GOD, and springing from the fact that we Englishmen, being many, are one Bread. One blood flows

in our veins; the strifes of parties are but the waves which disturb the surface of a deep lake—at a whisper of a danger threatening the dear country to which we all belong, they are in a moment still, and there appears to a surprised world the sight of a country at unity with itself, and with great shining depths of confidence and trust which not all the party strife in the world has been able to disturb.

Whether the present crisis passes or not, may England thus meet every trouble which meets her in the days that are to come, as one Bread.

(2.) But if it is to be so, then our motto of to-day must be lived out in the country itself in times of peace. If there is one thing more than another which would paralyse this country in the midst of a national crisis abroad, it would be class bitterness at home—"a house divided against a house falleth."

We pass then to our second question: What bearing has our motto of to-day on our duty as citizens of our common city? What spectacle ought London to present if she is to live up to the Christian ideal? And here again, with a terseness that goes to the root of the matter, we have the answer—one Bread.

Can we really say that as a city we have yet taken this home to our hearts?

To imagine that the working classes as a body are full of bitterness because others are better off than themselves is known to be a gross libel by those who have lived long among them; but what does stir up a dangerous spirit, and what might one day divide up London into a "city of the rich" and a "city of the poor," is when legislation is either allowed, or, on the other hand, denied, which seems to contradict what they all know to be the Christian teaching that we, being many, are "one bread."

(*a.*) Take, for instance, the question of the supply of East London water.

I have no intention of discussing at length that thorny question this afternoon. But the East-Ender feels, and justly feels, that he has a grievance, wherever the fault may lie; he pays for a constant supply, and he does not get it. Now for three summers in the hottest part of the year, when the need is most distressing, he has been put on short supply; drains have been unflushed, smells have increased, and he has been, to use the very mildest term possible, inconvenienced in a distressing way.

One Bread

One summer during the short supply I was visiting a dying girl in a top garret on one of the hottest days in the summer; every one was out at work except the sister who was downstairs attending to the kitchen; the poor girl's lips were parched with thirst, and she was dying fast. I looked round for something to moisten her lips with, but there was no water in the house, and I had myself to go half a mile to where I lived and fetch some of the water we had stored ourselves from the early morning supply.

Now I am ready to admit nearly all that might be said about an incident like that—I am ready to admit that the sister, ignorant as she was, ought to have read a notice which would have been posted in her street, to warn her of her shortened supply. I am quite ready to admit that, if I had known better the places of supply, I might have found a standpipe in the next street. I should be the last to tell that story as if taking a one-sided view of a difficult question. It can hardly be better summed up than in the pages of the *Oxford House Chronicle*. "We have no sympathy with those who think that an increased supply is only a matter of

buying water from other Companies, ignoring the practical difficulties which in some cases would prevent the water from being made available for the drought area, even if the Companies were willing to buy all there was for sale. We may also remark in passing that the party which is most insistent on the shortcomings of the Company's management, is precisely that which in 1893 successfully opposed the Company's scheme for enlarging their reserve supply, and in the following year only allowed the scheme to be sanctioned in Parliament by a small majority."

I am only too glad not only to admit but to bear witness to the courtesy and consideration shown personally to me by the hard-worked officials of the East London Water Company, but we must carry our thoughts far beyond a company; even if I thought they were in the wrong, I should not use this pulpit to say so, where there is no opportunity for reply. We know the arguments on both sides only too well; on the one hand, that when they wanted greater storage their bill was defeated; on the other, that negotiations with other companies might have been made sooner, and that dividends

should not be paid out of money received for a commodity not delivered. So much if the question is mentioned at all in a pulpit it seems essential to say, but it would lift the question entirely on a higher level if we asked this: Are we citizens of London considering it as One Bread? I hold that we are not one Bread until we feel the distress of that dying girl as we should feel the distress of our own sister, and that whether we live in the East, West, North, or South, we should set ourselves to find a remedy.

(*b.*) And so with the Housing question.

Much has been done, but much left undone. So far as can be ascertained by statistics, 400,000 in London live in single room tenements, 40,000 live five in a room, and 8000 seven in a room. I have never seen a room in London let at less than half-a-crown, and what sort of rooms some of them are may be best seen by a tour of inspection with the Sanitary Committee of a Vestry.

What the moral effect of overcrowding is no one who knows the facts can doubt, what the physical effect is the doctors can tell us, and indeed it is revealed by comparing the death-

rates of a congested district with the death-rate of the rest of London; again then I say, if we mean anything by our motto, "One Bread," every man and woman who have their own sons and daughters brought up in good homes and healthy surroundings at the one end of the town must ask themselves what they are doing to secure the elements of health to the boys and girls of other parents at the other end.

What can I do? you ask.

One thing at anyrate you can do. If you are taking rent from property, see that it is sanitary; see that the tenants are treated like men and not like animals; do not leave it to an agent, and ask no questions if the rent is paid. You can do more. You can join a Sanitary Committee of the Mansion House Council, or start a committee where one is not started. The one in Bethnal Green is worked by a lawyer, and has on it doctors, surveyors, one or two gentlemen of leisure, and working-men; or perhaps most useful of all, you could go and live in a poor district, and after a time get elected on to the local Vestry, and when you have got the confidence of your colleagues, get them to use the large power put in their

hands by the law, to close houses and enforce sanitation.

(*c.*) Are we going to sit down for ever before the moral state of our streets?

Not if we are "One Bread." If we are "One Bread" in deed and not only in name, we shall feel the shame of our sisters as our own.

Again this winter at the Purity Council at the Church House for the Preventive and Rescue Work of the diocese, we are bending every nerve to stem the tide of evil. We have the executive composed of men and women, and besides that two sub-committees, one of women working to save the girls, and a new one lately formed, of men, to do what we can to shield from temptation the boys and young men who come to London, and we look to our fellow-citizens who cannot themselves take part in the work to give us the means to carry on our work.

At present the City does not act as "One Bread" in this. Though local associations have funds of their own, the Central Executive has only a miserable £600 placed at present at its disposal. Surely, dear friends, if we felt these things as we should, if it was a burden to us

that these hundreds of lost sisters tramp the streets of our city every night, and that thousands are kept in a tyranny from which they have unaided no escape; if we saw that fresh country lad, fresh perhaps from school, go down into the vortex of vice under a temptation which he cannot resist, that £600 a year could soon be raised to £6000; workers would pour in to the cause with a zeal and love shown at present by a few, and the city would cry out on Citizen Sunday—"On this question at any rate we are One Bread."

(3.) I have left myself but a few minutes to point the last moral of the Banner, but it would be impossible to close without doing so. Why are we one Bread? Because, says St. Paul, we are all partakers of that one Bread.

Are we?

That is just what we are not; that is just where we fail. If we were, then in all probability such a sermon as this would be unnecessary. So closely would that one Bread bind us, so strongly would it stir within us, that we should be seen more clearly to be one Bread ourselves. Why is it that, whereas in the early Church all Christians received this one

Bread apparently every Sunday, and were even looked on as self-excommunicated if they missed three, now not one in a hundred of those who call themselves members of the Church of England are regular Communicants at all?

The question would require an afternoon to itself to answer in its fulness; it is enough to ask why are you not a Communicant?

(*a.*) Is it some foolish misunderstanding about eating and drinking your own damnation?

Certainly you would eat and drink your own condemnation if you came with a lie in your right hand, if you came with a sin which you meant to keep, or were not in charity with your neighbours; but if you truly repent of your sins past, and live in love and in charity with your neighbour, and intend to lead a new life, then you equally incur your own condemnation when you do not come. You turn your back on the one Bread which the one SAVIOUR has supplied; you receive the invitation to the great feast, but you have married a wife, or you have bought a yoke of oxen, or you have purchased a field, or you have fifty other excuses, but you do not come.

(*b.*) But I am not good enough.

Nor is any one else. We come to be made

good; we have a long journey to the mountain of holiness, and we want food for the journey. "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee."

(*c.*) I cannot live up to it, do you say? But you must. We all must live up to heaven; that is the standard which we cannot escape, and if we really are not fit for the Holy Communion, then we are certainly not fit for heaven.

"When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment." It seems very difficult to see how a man is to get the wedding garment for the Divine Feast in heaven if he has not taken the trouble, by self-examination, confession, and amendment, to secure the wedding garment freely offered for the Divine feast on earth.

Rather with the "One Bread" upon the Holy Table at the time prescribed, and in the way directed by the Church, children of the one GOD and FATHER, followers of one LORD JESUS CHRIST, inspired by one Spirit, and members of one Body, we will come reverently forward to be partakers of the one Bread; and having become partakers, we will go forth to be one Bread—to be one Bread as members of our common country

in our country's cause, to be one Bread as fellow-citizens of one city, and through these lesser unities to reach up to one Brotherhood of Man, where French and English, Russian and German, are one Bread in CHRIST JESUS.

XIII

THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST[1]

"*The power of the Holy Ghost.*"—ROM. xv. 13.

IF old University men were asked where and when they could get apart from the rush of life, and quietly look at the present in the light of the past, and the past in the light of the present, they would probably answer that it was when they were able to spend a quiet Sunday at their University itself. There is a permanence about a great place which gives a sense of continuity to life, and which brings up by a law of association the thoughts and feelings of the past, while at the same time it humbles by its very greatness the individual himself. And if further, an old University man were asked what, in the light of such quiet introspection, he had learned since his University days from the experience of life, which had been more or less completely hidden from him when he was up at the University, he

[1] Preached before the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

would often have to confess that it was a living belief in the Power of the Holy Ghost. Think for a moment how easily the great language of religion glides off us in our University days—repentance, conviction of sin, miserable sinners, the love of God, the Sacrifice of the Cross—it has all come down to us through echoes of the school chapel from the days of the nursery; it is all right and proper, and the thing to believe, but is it not also often to us, during our undergraduate days—

> "A tale of little meaning, though the words are strong?"

I for one never wonder at the sharp shock of doubt with which a boy in the sixth at school, or a young man reading for Greats at Oxford, or his Tripos at Cambridge, suddenly wakes up to find how double-edged are the tools he has been carelessly playing with in his hand, and to grasp the real import of the awful language he has been so casually taking on his lips.

And on no point in religion does this seem more strikingly true than with regard to the great language heard so constantly in lessons, in sermons, and in hymns about the Holy Ghost. It has been said that the Christian

world is full of unconscious Arianism, but whether that is true or not, it is certainly true that it is full of unconscious Macedonianism, that the words HOLY SPIRIT are used very much in the mere sense of "a holy influence," and that the belief in a Divine Person, tabernacling now on earth, as really as CHRIST ever tabernacled in the home at Bethany, brooding, guiding, superintending, warning, comforting, nerving, inspiring, touching with life in baptism, "falling" in strength at confirmation, consecrating natural things into supernatural food, is often almost entirely absent from the religion of the young.

It may be that, as individuals, we have to learn our religion piecemeal, as the world itself had to be taught, first that there was one GOD, then that this one GOD was a FATHER, then that there was a SON, then that there was a HOLY SPIRIT, and that it is impossible for the human mind to take in so many great things all at once; but, be that as it may, it will be often found that the relative degree of apprehension of this truth forms the great distinction between the Christian of middle life and the Christian of boyhood or of early youth.

How does this awakening come? Something in this way, does it not?

You meet a man or group of men who are facing great odds in the world with a power which is obviously not their own; they have a realisation of the presence of CHRIST, unlike anything you have seen before; they are men of unobtrusive but continuous prayer; they may be rough and unpolished in their speech, but they clearly and obviously say the right things at the right time, and with a power which carries conviction to the soul; rugged and even brusque in their ways, they have a tenderness to the weak and the unprotected, and a power of sympathy which nothing can tire out—

> "The den they enter grows a shrine,
> The grimy sash an oriel burns,
> Their cup of water warms like wine,"

and the last line of the poet dawns on you like a revelation—

> "Their speech is filled from heavenly urns."

In other words, it becomes clear and obvious to you that there is a power within them, not themselves, which makes for righteousness, and

that power is not some vague and general tendency, but a personal force which controls them, hushes them, softens them, informs them, uses them. You turn again to your Bible with a new idea; that there was something said about all this: "When the Comforter is come, which I will send from the FATHER, He shall testify of Me." "He shall take of Mine, and show it to you." "He shall give you in that hour what ye ought to say." "He shall convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." "I will pray the FATHER, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, and they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST." "And the HOLY GHOST said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul." "As many as are led by the Spirit of GOD they are the sons of GOD."

And as you put two and two together, it becomes indubitably certain with a certainty which probably no soul can pass on fully to another without leading them through the slow experience, that the words of the Bible explain the experience of life, the experience of life the Bible, and that what you see in life is no strange and inexplicable

phenomenon, but that you are watching "good men, full of the HOLY GHOST," and that the sight which drew you to it with the fascination which drew Moses to the burning bush is the Person of the HOLY GHOST at work.

NOW, GOD forbid that I should seem to imply that there were not or are not good men "full of the HOLY GHOST" at the Universities themselves; we have probably all yet to learn to our shame how much we missed through youthful conceit, from blind self-importance and spiritual sloth, the spiritual lessons which were waiting at our respective Universities for us in the lives and words of men whom we were seeing and touching and hearing every day of our lives; but still, as loyal members of the University to which we respectively belong, we are bound to ask, Is it the distinguishing characteristic of our University that it is filled and permeated, not only by a belief in the power of the HOLY GHOST, but by His personal presence; would it strike a visitor to us that this was His habitual home, that He was, if we may dare to say so, "At home" in the University, and that for instance, "Dominus illuminatio mea," which we take as our motto at Oxford, was justified by a special devotion to the

enlightening power of "the LORD, the Spirit" and "Hinc lucem et pocula sacra," which is the motto of Cambridge University, by a constant reference to the source of light and holiness?

I. And there would be at least three tests, would there not, of the pervading influence in an University of the HOLY GHOST? And the first would be—

(1.) Unity in diversity. "There is diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administration, but the same LORD; and there are diversities of operations, but the same GOD which worketh all in all."

Could you describe in weightier language the scope and purpose of a Christian University? No talent left unnoticed, no branch of learning despoiled, no administration, however onerous and monotonous, incapable of consecration; no operation, however unimportant and apparently trivial, incapable of being a channel of Divine working, but the whole complicated and complex machinery converging to one end, and controlled and informed by one Spirit, and that end the glory of GOD, and that Spirit the power of the HOLY GHOST.

Surely nothing would bind together colleges to

the University and to one another, nothing would destroy more completely what may be called the parochialism of college feeling when it passes from true and proper *esprit de corps* into exclusiveness, nothing would bind closer teachers and taught, the life of the river with the life of the study, and consecrate both in the revived life of the college chapels, as a baptism of fire, as a revived belief in One Spirit, whose we all are, and whom we all serve, and of whose marvellous conceptions and manifestations our Universities of Cambridge and Oxford themselves are only two among many.

That is the ideal which has fired the imagination and inflamed the love of many of the greatest men whom they have sent forth into the world, and who have died, like Mr. Gladstone, with the inextinguishable love of a great Christian for a great Christian University.

(2.) The presence of the HOLY GHOST will be discovered in a University by a growing and increasing faith in JESUS CHRIST. "He shall take of Mine," said CHRIST Himself, "and shall show it unto you."

There will doubtless be, and there always must be in a University, a questioning spirit; one's

time there is the time for asking questions; it is the time for taking out our boyish faith and looking at it in the light of day; but on the other hand, if the HOLY GHOST is present in power, it will not mean a wholesale throwing over of old beliefs; it will not mean, in many cases, a lifelong scepticism; there will be going on so much of "taking of CHRIST'S and showing it to men"; so much of mutual help to one another, such a warm atmosphere of spiritual confidence and reasonable faith, that the boy's faith will expand fruitfully into the man's, and that there shall be so many who will to do the will of GOD, that there shall be numbers yearly who get to know of the doctrine that it is indeed of GOD. The natural shyness of young Englishmen to speak on religious subjects will not be allowed to degenerate into a cowardly fear of bearing witness when the occasion comes, and still less into the miserable betrayal of pretending to have no faith, or serious thought, when they really have; and even when the difficult and dreaded moment comes when it is imperative to say something, or to do something for the peace of mind, or the salvation of the character of

a friend, "the HOLY GHOST will give you in that hour what you ought to say."

(3.) Thirdly, an infallible test of the presence or absence of the HOLY GHOST in a University, is the presence or absence of a missionary spirit.

"Tarry in Jerusalem till ye be clothed with power from on high," was the command the disciples had received; they did tarry in Jerusalem, and they were clothed with power from on high, and what was the result? They were lost sight of, preaching in the distance; they were swept round the world by a missionary zeal which nothing could resist; the rushing mighty wind carried them with it; the tongues of fire touched their lips with fervent zeal; they were changed from weak and timid peasants or fishermen into the world's apostles.

Is the missionary spirit increasing or decreasing in our Universities? It becomes a terrible question to ask and answer if it means the presence or absence in the University of the HOLY GHOST, and yet it appears to be true, that less University men in proportion are ordained than used to be. It is certainly true that the Foreign Missions, such as the Oxford

Mission to Calcutta, the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, are in constant straits from lack of men, and that it needs very constant and persevering effort to keep up the supply of laymen even for the Home Mission field, as represented by the Cambridge House, the Oxford House, by Toynbee Hall and the College Missions. Take, for instance, the vast district over which the East London Church Fund works; with its 1,800,000 inhabitants, it is larger than Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester put together; it is almost entirely poor; it has problems in it, on the solution of which depends the future of the country, and the success or failure of the Church; from it, as also from the kindred district of South London, rises a great cry from thousands of sick beds to GOD, "Whom wilt Thou send, and who will come to us?" You would have thought that a body of keen, tender-hearted, spirited men, such as compose an University, would be sending up perpetual relays to deal with so mighty a problem, and to respond to so pathetic a cry, and yet there are ten curacies vacant in that district at the present moment, and constantly we have to fill up vacant posts, not from Univer-

sity men, whose gifts and training would seem specially to fit them for the work, but from those who, good and excellent as they often are, have never been to the University at all.

Surely then, when the Advent-call nerves us to think of the approach of our LORD Himself, certain at last, and possibly nearer than we think, it is a prayer which should be breathed by every loyal son of Cambridge and Oxford, that the missionary spirit may be poured out more abundantly on these Universities, or—what is the same thing—that they may be filled more with the power of the HOLY GHOST, and that, like happy mothers of spiritual children, both Universities may send out more and more and more of their sons to spend and be spent at home and abroad to advance the onward progress of the kingdom of GOD.

II. But after all, there is a certain danger in speaking in this way about what the University is to do. It is the easiest thing in the world to lose sight of our individual responsibility behind the University, just as so often you hear people talking glibly about what "the Church" ought to do, without sufficiently realising that they are the Church.

The Power of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost can only dwell effectively in the University by being welcomed and given full scope for His work in every individual heart. What, then, is our own individual attitude towards the Holy Ghost?

(1.) And first—have we all got so far as to believe in Him, clearly and genuinely as a person at all?

My young brothers, if I may address a word personally and especially to you, to believe this is the first secret, not merely of a successful ministry, but of a happy Christian life. When Jesus Christ was baptized, God the Son was in the water, God the Father said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and God the Holy Ghost descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him; a distinct Person with a distinct work and a distinct power.

To rest upon that gentle and yet irresistible strength in temptation, in dryness of prayer to ask the Holy Spirit to pray in us with divine pleadings too deep for human language, which appears to be the meaning of "groanings which cannot be uttered"; to surrender our lives when young to be guided according to the will of God, to put ourselves at His disposal as living instru-

ments of the Spirit, to submit to Him the question which perhaps agitate some here to-day, as to whether or not they shall be ordained, or, if not, what they shall do in life; to bring in sorrow and bereavement the sad heart to the Comforter to be comforted; and then to go out and comfort a sorrowing and mourning world with the comfort with which we ourselves are Comforted of GOD—that is the life of religion, that is the way of peace, that is the path of strength, and he who treads it patiently and firmly to the end,

> "This is the happy Warrior; this is he
> That every Man in arms should wish to be."

(2.) And then, secondly, having believed in the Person of the HOLY GHOST, the second thing is to put ourselves in connection with the fulness of His operations.

There has been much controversy lately as to the due relation of baptism and confirmation, and where Dr. Mason and Dr. Wirgman differ as they do so widely in their respective books upon the subject, who shall presume to dogmatise? But this at least is clear to those who accept the Bible as the record of a revelation at all, that special and progressive gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT are

asserted to be connected with the outward signs of baptism and confirmation—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of GOD." We are sometimes apt in the heat of controversy to forget that it was CHRIST Himself who spoke these words, that it was He Himself, and not the later Church, who established a form for admission to His kingdom. If CHRIST, then, the denouncer of mere outward show, established a form, it follows that it must be a form with a spiritual significance, for He hated formalism from the bottom of His heart, and that baptism was such a spiritual act with a spiritual significance was as clear to Mr. Maurice, when he wrote "The Kingdom of CHRIST," as to an advanced High Churchman of the present day.

What then are we to say of confirmation? "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the LORD JESUS"—that is the simple and yet tremendously significant account of the first recorded confirmation in the 8th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Hardly less striking is the second—"Have ye received the HOLY GHOST since ye believed?" asks the

Apostle St. Paul on arriving at Ephesus, as recorded in the 19th chapter of the Acts. "We have not so much as heard whether the HOLY GHOST was given," is the answer. Then after baptizing them with Christian baptism "into the name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST"—for they had only been baptized previously with John's baptism—he laid his hands upon them, and when he laid his hands upon them the HOLY GHOST came upon them.

It is clear, then, that if we are to trust the Scriptures at all, the "falling of the HOLY GHOST" is associated with the laying on of hands, and that whether we speak of the gift in Baptism as the gift of life, and the gift in Confirmation as the gift of strength, or whether we go so far as to say that, while gifts of the HOLY GHOST are given before, the Personal indwelling of the HOLY SPIRIT takes place only at Confirmation, yet it is certain that no one who duly weighs the words of Scripture can deny the intimate connection which these two outward signs bear to the individual's relation to the HOLY GHOST.

And after all the fact that so great a gift should be associated with outward signs is only

in accordance with the way in which GOD has always dealt with the children of men.

The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, however to be explained, was understood as an outward and visible sign to the Israelites of GOD's protecting care; Naaman had to wash in the river Jordan as an outward and visible sign of His inward and invisible healing. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST put clay round the eyes of a blind man and tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam; we ourselves shake a man we know by the hand, as an outward and visible sign of our inward and spiritual friendship for him. Nature itself, as has been beautifully drawn out in the last book of Mr. Illingworth on "Divine Immanence," is a great sacrament, and a beautiful sunset is a spiritual force in calming an unrestful and unresting world. Is it not then in accordance with all GOD's methods and plans, to come into the visible world as far as He can, and even, as to use the old and beautiful expression for confirmation "He seals" His child "with the seal of the LORD"? He sends down the HOLY SPIRIT invisibly as a Dove to be a source of strength and power from that moment even for ever.

"Have ye then received the HOLY GHOST

since ye believed," St. Paul would ask you to-day if he was here. His subsequent action shows that he would mean by that question, "Have you been confirmed?" If not, one must fain ask, why not? The path of obedience is the path of power, and if we are to be strong, we must humble ourselves to receive to the very end. Some may hesitate, because they may seem by their actions to condemn those who do not follow their example, but he would indeed be a bigot who asserted that GOD was bound by His own covenanted means of grace, because men were, or would do anything but gratefully acknowledge that the Tides of the Spirit far overflow their recognised and normal channel.

Who, for instance, would ignore or minimise the splendid zeal and devotion in Nonconformist communities, or deny the power of the HOLY GHOST in some of the most spiritual men who have ever lived?

No! we who as Churchmen put ourselves in line with what we understand to be the normal working of the HOLY GHOST, do it without a word of presumptuous dictation to the HOLY GHOST, as to how He is to work, and still less without a word of recrimination to those who

differ from us, but because we understand that to us who so read the Scriptures and accept the age-long interpretation of them by the Church, in that way, and in that way alone, the fulness of the power of the HOLY GHOST will come upon us.

(3.) But to any one who knows the life and the customs of our public schools, all this may seem widely beside the mark. "Confirmed! you say; of course we have been confirmed; it would have wanted more moral courage than we possessed not to be confirmed. I wish I could have my confirmation over again, when I thought more of it, and understood more what it meant." So some might say, while others may look back to their School confirmation as the real turning-point in their spiritual life, but to both the last word of St. Paul on the "Power of the HOLY GHOST" is inspiring and uplifting. "Stir up into flame (ἀναζωπύρει) the gift of GOD which is in you by the laying on of hands," so St. Paul cries to young men with his splendid balance of common sense and Churchmanship; the gift is in you, whether you felt it or not, by the laying on of hands; now stir it into flame; it is no charm; it is no mere *opus operatum;* it must be fanned and cherished into a burning flame.

How are we to do it?

First, by regular prayer; the breath of Heaven comes when we pray and fans the dying emblems into fire; to meditate on the Bible is to put fuel on the fire; just as coal contains the concentrated sunbeams of ages, which we liberate by burning, so the Bible contains the word of GOD; it is the concentrated inspiration of men who spake and wrote as moved by the HOLY GHOST, men who were, it is true, men of their own age, men subject to the limitations of knowledge on history and science inevitable in their age, but still moved by the HOLY GHOST, who, as we say in the Collect for the day, "has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning."

To meditate then daily on our knees if only for a few minutes is to add fuel to the flame, and if to that we add a life of service to our fellow-men, and a life of steadfast and regular communion with our LORD and SAVIOUR in the "pocula sacra" of which the Cambridge motto speaks, we are doing what in us lies to stir up into flame the gift which is in us by the laying on of hands, and to be clothed with the power of the HOLY GHOST.

Get back then to the old times of prayer again,

if you have been led away to give them up; take out again the old Bible; come back to your School Communions; remove that bad habit which has grown upon you and has crushed down but not, thank GOD, out, the Divine fire; heap on the fuel of some bit of work, however humble, done for GOD and your fellow-men; and the fresh breeze from heaven will fan again to life the dying embers; the old love will come back into your cold heart with new force; the power of the HOLY GHOST will stir and quicken within you and foster every sign of life, and you will do your part to make the Universities—what they were meant to be—great signs in England of Christian Unity, Christian Faith, and Christian Love—pillars of cloud by day, and fire by night, to guide the nation to the Promised Land.

XIV

LIGHT IN THE EAST[1]

"*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*"—ISAIAH lx. 1.

THOSE who have ever been privileged to see from the shoulder or the summit of a mountain in Switzerland the sun rise will never forget that wonderful sight. They will remember how, in the chill of the hour before dawn, great clouds had brooded down in the valley, rolling mists had lain beneath their feet, and thick darkness had dwelt over the whole earth. Suddenly, as they stood there, there has been a faint flush of pink on one snowy summit, then another, then another, then another. The pink has changed to a bright gold, then to a deeper gold, and then, suddenly, like a giant set free, up with great leaps and bounds and a most astonishing speed has come the sun and flooded

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on November 14, 1898, for the East London Church Fund.

the world with light; and as it has come up, it has seemed to cry to the sleeping earth, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." Now it is by no exaggerated simile that I take that glorious sight for what is taking place in the East-end of London to-day. The message of the Church to the sleeping torpor of the spiritual life of East London is "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee."

And, my friends, in order to make this congregation understand how true that simile is, in order to rally you around us in our united effort to make the glorious Gospel of the blessed GOD shine in every little garret of East London, I shall venture to point out in some detail what are the chief problems which beset us, what are the clouds which, as it were, brood over this valley, and then what are the signs, the glorious signs, of the coming dawn. And first, what are the chief problems which form the darkness which broods over East London? The first difficulty which faces the Church in her work is the enormous population with which we have to deal. The area over which this East London Church Fund works comprises a population of

1,800,000—that is to say, more than the population of Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool all put together. I have heard, during a whole morning, a discussion between two parish clergymen, one of whom had a population of 24,000 and the other a population of 22,000, as to whether it was better in working such parishes to leave a gap in the middle which you do not touch at all, or to kill the junior curate with overwork. It was argued not as a joke, but as a most serious and awful problem which constantly besets our parish clergy—whether it is better to leave five or six thousand in the midst of their parishes, and not to attempt to touch them, or to risk the terrible danger of breaking down the younger clergy who are at their side. But the numbers by themselves do not constitute the worst problem. If those numbers were made up, as many towns are made up, of rich and poor, the well-to-do looking after the poor, and those who have a certain amount giving in proportion to what they have, then the problem which faces the bishops of East and North London would be an easy one. But we have this second problem to deal with. Almost the whole of the 1,800,000 are poor. They give generously

considering their poverty. We expect to raise from East and North London £3000. And in special gifts time after time the poorest of the poor give with a generosity and a self-sacrifice which would absolutely astonish you. One woman was found by the clergyman of her district as he went on his round engaged in washing, at which she was earning her living. He had made a request in the mission church the Sunday before that they might give some kind of ornament to the perfectly bare church. The woman now summoned him in a hasty, unceremonious way, and said, "I wanted to give something in memory of that little lad, the child of the late missioner, who died." And, to the clergyman's utmost astonishment, she brought out from her hard-earned savings a guinea, which she gave him towards the purchase of a cross for the church. The next day, while visiting the same district, three women from some of the poorest streets met him. One of them was very angry because he had not asked her for money for the church before. She gave ten shillings, and the other two gave five shillings each out of their poverty towards the ornaments of the mission church. This very rochet I am

wearing now was a gift only yesterday from a working woman in East London. I might tell you many other stories of their extraordinary generosity. The East London Church is not ashamed to beg when she is making such sacrifices herself. Then besides the great population and poverty we have the terrible evil of overcrowding. Four hundred thousand people in East London live in single tenement rooms, 40,000 live five in a room, 8000 live seven in a room, and some actually live ten in a room. Now I only have to ask you to think over what that means. I don't say from a physical point of view: the death-rate shows that. In one crowded district the death-rate is constantly from 22 to 27 per 1000, compared with 18 per 1000 in the rest of London. The overcrowding is undoubtedly largely the cause. But think of the morals! Oh, fathers and mothers who come here this evening, think if you had to bring up your own dear boys and girls five or six in a room, the only room in which to eat, sit, and sleep; think what it would mean for the morals of the children. Think how hard it would be to bring them up in decency at all. You will understand from this what a tremendous problem this overcrowd-

ing means to the parish clergy working in the East End.

Then there is also overwork. When the heads of a family have to think the whole of their time how they are going to get bread for the children, when they are at work ten or twelve and sometimes fourteen hours a day for bare bread, do you not see how hard it is to preach the Gospel to them, do you not see that their whole mind is taken up with worrying over the problem of how they are going to keep the wolf from the door? Does not that increase terribly the difficulty of bringing the blessed Gospel in at all? We know ourselves when some worry or trouble comes, how it seems to take up all our mind so that we cannot take interest in anything else. That, I can assure you, is the permanent state of some of our people. Over-worry and over-work form a dark problem for the workers in East London. And, remember, if the Church of God goes to sleep the devil does not. The Prince of Darkness is at work actively in the district. When the working man comes home from his long toil and looks for some little recreation, looks to have some little enjoyment naturally at the end of his day's work, if the

Church has not something to give him, there is a public-house at every corner. No wonder the temptation is, time after time for hundreds and hundreds of working men, too great. I could tell you, if I had time, of many stories of how drink in our district plays havoc with the people. If the following little story causes a smile, surely it will be a smile of pathetic interest. Three children in one of our poorest districts were observed playing by the Board schoolmaster. He asked them what they were playing at, and one of them replied that they were playing at "Home." One of them was father and another was mother. Father was beating mother when the policeman—the third child—came and took him up. If you can imagine that being "home" in the minds of those children, you will realise what havoc in the homes of East London drink works. Then with drink comes betting and gambling. I saw myself one morning a man stand outside the Oxford House, in which I then lived, busy with the trade that he was carrying on. Boys and girls and working men came up to him with something and put it in his hand. When, suspicion being aroused, he was arrested it was found that he had £20 on him in shillings and

coppers taken from the boys and girls during dinner-hour. And the betting and gambling which is preying upon the morals of our young people, I dare say all over London, is especially a danger unless the Church is ready with some antidote with which to fight the devil. So, again, there is the secularist at the street corners and in the park, using these very dangers and this suffering to persuade the boys and girls, the women and the men gathered in knots around him, that the Bible is a pack of lies, that the clergy are impostors, that the LORD JESUS Himself was either deceived or deceiver, and sowing in their hearts the seeds of distrust and disbelief.

What is wanted in a district like that is a bright, cheerful, brave, courageous Church to plunge down into the midst of it, full of inventiveness, with new schemes and new cures for every problem as it arises. What is wanted is a Church strong enough to cry in every corner of the district, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee!"

My friends, that is what we try to make our East London Church. We do our best with

under-manned forces in our poverty to attain to the ideal which we are certain God has put before us, and, if I may now show you what the East London Church, in spite of immense difficulties, has done, you will see, that if London as a whole rallies round us, we must send into every corner the light which has not yet shone there. To show you how little the light has penetrated to every corner, let me tell you of the numbers which we sampled in Bethnal Green on Saturday afternoons. We took about eighty or ninety men every Saturday in the summer, and we ascertained how many out of these went to Church or to any other place of worship. The proportion was one in eighty. We took next a thousand boys, and nine hundred had G.N.—"goes nowhere"—against them. On the other hand, if you will follow me, you will see what a tremendous hold, considering all these difficulties, the East London Church has already got upon the people. Come round the district in imagination with me. Night after night the Bishop has to go down into his district and go from parish to parish, from one end to another of the vast area. In every parish, High Church or Low Church, where work is going on, he finds a keen-spirited band of workers,

a devoted congregation gathered round the parish clergy. We have—let us be quite honest—one or two parishes where the workers are not fitted for the work. But, with very few exceptions, every parish has a band of devoted workers gathered round the Church. One day this last week I stood at the door of a church, the clergyman of which has gathered together four hundred Church workers. Throughout the whole district we have not fewer than ten thousand voluntary workers who give their services after their work, and hard work it is. If I may tell a personal incident of what happened the week that has just closed, you will see how deeply the hearts of the people of East London have begun to love their Church. A few nights ago I re-opened a church which for forty years had been almost the despair of East London. Under new management it had been entirely restored, and we were having a happy re-opening with seven hundred or eight hundred people in the church during the service. At one end of the church there was a slight disturbance, very slight, it could be hardly noticed. But the people of the district thought that any disturbance at all was an insult to the Bishop who had come down to re-open their church, and although

for three-quarters of an hour after the service—totally unconscious of what was going on—I stayed in the vicarage to speak to the clergyman about his work, when I came out I found a large crowd had assembled to see their Bishop home. They were all very poor people, and some were not Church people at all, but they cheered the Bishop for half a mile and said, "We have waited because we will not stand by and see any one molest our Bishop at his work." If you knew what the loyalty of their warm hearts means in an incident like that, you will see it is only typical of what is going on throughout the district, typical of how the East London Church is winning the hearts of the people and causing the light to shine upon their souls.

Or take, for instance, such a wonderful fact as this, that every day there is passing through the district a great army of visitors. Unknown to the world and unnoticed, an army of visitors is passing up and down every little staircase and garret of the district. Only this afternoon, after an afternoon sermon at Whitechapel at the institution of a new vicar, I was summoned by one of the curates of Whitechapel to go with him to a man who had sent a

special messenger to ask me to go before he died. I went with the curate up a long staircase to the very top of the house, and there, two hours ago, was a man lying dying. He had round him every comfort, he had by his side, at his beck and call, his friend who had fetched me. He had searched him out in this upstairs room, and was acting as his constant friend. I knelt by him and prayed by him, and spoke to him, and sat some time by him. That is the sort of thing that is going on every day up and down the district. Ask who it is that places flowers by that bedside, who brought that jelly. It is the East London clergyman or his parish worker, who, by his constant visiting, is the friend of the district. I often think, as I see that silent army going forth to their work, of the beautiful lines of the American poet—

> "The den they enter grows a shrine,
> The grimy sash an oriel burns,
> Their cup of water warms like wine,
> Their speech is filled from heavenly urns."

And then, as the sun keeps shining on the different peaks, there is another peak—the childhood of the district. Help us to gather in the

children of East London, and keep them pure. Help us to bring them up as dear children before the LORD. Lastly, I must speak to you of the evening work, the club work which goes on constantly throughout the district. For the boys and girls, the young men and women, we have now from end to end of the district bright places full of light and love, and good fellowship and warmth, where they can be safe from the temptations of the public-houses and the streets.

Now the question is, Are we, in making this light shine upon the darkness of the district, to feel that we are working as the representatives of one United Church, or are we not? This morning, at the church in West London in which I preached, the offertory for the fund was £60 This time last year the evening congregation of Westminster Abbey gave an offertory which was equal to that of the morning congregation, and by the addition of ten shillings received the next morning was ahead of it. To-day, from some unexplained reason, the morning congregation offertory was £8 or £9 short of that of last year, and the afternoon offertory also was less. Is it too much to ask that the evening congregation,

by no means so well off as the others, may, by their self-sacrifice and generosity, redress the balance? It is my duty to sit in the chair of the Grants Committee, and constantly reject applications from overworked clergy, because we have not the money to give them for another helper. If during to-day we receive a really generous response, when I sit in the chair on Friday next I shall be able to say Yes instead of No to many appeals.

Or, again, let me appeal for personal work. There is a parish which sent me a letter yesterday to say, "We have no workers, we have no one to visit, what are we to do? Send us some ladies to visit the people, or some men to work." Are there none here who will send me their names and come and give their personal service for the cause? And I ask also for your prayers—yes, in no spirit of affectation as something thrown in at the end of a sermon, but with the belief that every boy and girl who will kneel down once a week, and pray for the work of the Church in East London, has the power given to them by God to say, "Let there be light." And if in that way we work together, this Church of East

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